

A RUN THROUGH THE WOODS

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5,989 WORDS

9TH GRADE CCHS

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I don't remember much. Everything was a blur. Running through the dark and dampened forest. Trees passing by me left and right, the forest passed me by as if it were on an endless treadmill set at lightning speed. The forest floor under my feet, then it was gone. I ran so hard my lungs were on fire, exploding out of my chest. My throat dry, like I had been without water for days. I don't remember feeling my legs. How long or how far had I run?

Running...Running...Running... Then BANG. A gunshot echoed through my ears. I kept running. Then another loud crack went through the air. I fell, and then everything went white. My vision gone, hearing fading, and the feeling of helplessness is what I remember from that day in the forest.

I woke up in a room of white. As I became more conscious I found myself lying in a hospital bed. The side guards were raised, and the back part of the bed, where my head lay, was slightly elevated. I was awake now, fully aware of my surroundings. I was in a hospital room; my arm had a tube running from it to a machine. Oxygen tubes were emerging from my nose. I noticed a dull throbbing in my head, now it was hammering. It felt like someone was hovering above me, consistently hitting me on the head with a hammer. In the background an annoying and rhythmic beep would sound. Beep...Beep...Beep... My headache was bad enough; I definitely didn't need that incessant beeping. "Would someone shut off that annoying beep?" I yelled out, only to remember that I was alone in this room. I was bound to my bed by wires and tubes, unsure what condition I was in. Next to my bed there sat a nicely upholstered cloth chair. It was a tasteless dark green color and sat unusually low to the ground. In the corner across the room to my left was a TV. It stared back at me with a black screen, part of my room was reflecting in it. I scanned the rest of the room, finding nothing of interest. Except for when I looked to my right. It was a cluster of hospital machinery. There was a heart monitor from which the beeping came. A breathing monitor and some other equipment displayed unrecognizable charts and numbers. There was also a morphine drip that was set up. A clear bag filled with a translucent liquid hung from a hook. The tube ran down to the bed, across the sheets, and into my arm. It seemed to me the dose was not large enough or was wearing off. I began to notice a painful jab in my side that was quite uncomfortable. I looked down at my side, my vision went blurry and my head swam. "Guess I can't turn my head too quickly," I whispered to myself as I closed my eyes and laid my head back down on the stiff stack of pillows. It dawned on me that I was unaware of the time of day. A large window that I had just noticed was in the middle of the left side wall. It was fairly large. Unfortunately the curtains were drawn which made it impossible to tell whether it was day or night. How long had I been lying in this bed, I asked myself.

My body was pretty stiff but the feeling of stiffness was nothing compared to how sore my body felt. From head to toe my body ached, crying out for painkillers. My chest ached, like my lungs were being punctured by thousands of invisible needles. My legs especially ached with such an intensity it was as if my legs were being crushed in a vice. I tried to ignore the pain and

fall back into the land of sleep. “Where is the nurse? I would think that someone would have checked up on me by now,” I said disappointedly. The pain coming from my head, legs, and the newly found stabbing feeling in my side made it extremely difficult to drift into sleep. Then I heard a click and a creak. My eyes snapped open and I turned my head to face the door.

Taking no notice of me a nurse walked in. She strutted over to the foot of the bed and picked up what I can only assume was my “file”. Letting out a “hmmm...” and a “uh-huh” here and there as she flipped through the many sheets of paper held in the manila folder. This nurse or doctor looked slightly older. I would guess maybe around fifty or sixty. She wore her hair short in a pixie-type style. Her brown hair had strands of silver that glistened in the light. She had a sweet face that was accented with wrinkles. She reminded me of what a grandma would look like. In the corners of her brilliant blue eyes were crows feet. She was surprisingly short and had a slight muffin top. She began to pace toward the side of the bed as she neared the end of the file. She closed the folder and looked up at me for the first time.

“Terribly sorry dear, I didn’t mean to interrupt your slumber. You are Addilyn Mortem¹¹, correct?” She said. She had a slight accent, but I could not place where she was from. Her voice was very soothing, it was smooth like velvet. She spoke quietly with great confidence. “Oh, you didn’t. I awoke quite some time ago. Yes I am Addilyn. I don’t suppose I could have some painkillers, or a greater dose of morphine. My head aches terribly and I have this uncomfortable feeling in my side,” I requested. “Of course dear,” She said as she adjusted a clip on the tube connected to the bag of crystalline liquid. I automatically began to feel the pains and aches recede and felt a feeling of drowsiness. “Do you not remember what happened to your side?” the nurse asked me. I replied in confusion, “I barely remember anything from the day I was in the forest.” “Well dear, you took quite a nasty fall and landed on an unearthed skyward facing tree root. The impact was so forceful that it punctured your left side before breaking off. Luckily for you the wound is nothing serious and infection free,” She stated matter-of-factly. “The real concern is your head; it looks as if it was the first part of your body to come into contact with the ground. Fortunately your skull was not damaged or cracked. However you did suffer and still are suffering extreme brain swelling,” she continued on.

“Other than the swelling did my head suffer any other injuries? Will there be any long term effects due to the swelling?” I inquired. “No, as long as we monitor the swelling and treat it properly you will have nothing to worry about for the long run. Now you should get some rest,” she suggested. “Thanks miss, I do feel quite drowsy. But one last thing, I never got your name.” The nurse replied, “Oh yes, beg your pardon. I’m Dr. Adele Mallard,” and with that she exited

¹ Latin for death

the room giving me no time to ask further questions. But something about her name stuck out to me. I'm unsure why, but I recognized it. With that final thought reminiscing in my mind, I fell into a deep sleep.

Days passed into weeks. Dr. Mallard had checked up on me every day. We actually became good friends. She brought me books to read, puzzles to complete, movies to watch, and many other stay in bed activities. This helped keep me entertained and was a nice break in my weekly routine. After my first encounter with Dr. Mallard, other nurses I did not know began to visit me. They came into my room to change the bandage on my side and often performed tests to see how well my brain was healing. I was absolutely clueless as to what they were doing. No one informed me of anything, in fact I rarely heard the nurses talk at all. When they did, it was inaudible for me to hear. I didn't leave my room much or my bed for that matter. When I did it was when I needed to use the bathroom which was across my room or when Dr. Mallard allowed me to go down to the hospital cafeteria to eat one or two of my daily meals. "We don't want to over-stimulate or overwhelm your brain with all the tumult. Seeing as how the swelling has gone down in the past week, we'd hate for it to start swelling again," Dr. Mallard answered my silent question.

A few minutes passed while Dr. Mallard reviewed the results of my most recent test. Just then a horrific realization dawned on me. I had not showered since I was in this hospital. "Dr. Mallard, would it be possible for me to shower? I can't imagine how dreadful I look." I requested. She replied instantly, "No problem dear, I will help you into the bathroom, just be careful." She flipped down the side guards on my bed, helped swing my legs over the edge of the bed, and aided me in the task of sitting up. I became slightly dizzy but the feeling wore off in mere seconds. She wrapped one arm around my waist and put one of my arms over her shoulder. We slowly made our way to the bathroom. We entered and Dr. Mallard turned the water on and left the room. I was a little shaky on my legs, but it wasn't anything I couldn't handle. I made my way over to the mirror mounted above the small sink.

I took one look in it and exclaimed, "God, I'm an absolute mess!" My hair was standing on its own in every direction. There were parts of dead leaves gnarled in my hair, and highlights of dried mud. Caked mud was cracking on one side of my face, and a patch of dried blood running from my hairline to my eyebrow. I raised my hands to examine how dirty they were. Dirt was crammed under my fingernails and around my nail bed. They looked like I had been making mud pies and refused to wash my hands afterward. However, I was not in the clothes I wore that day to the forest. I now wore drab white hospital clothes. One boring white shirt that was two sizes too big and matching pants. The mirror was now foggy from the steam emitting from the shower. I stripped from my clothes and walked into the shower. I took a seat on the shower chair deciding better safe than sorry. I felt the warm water hit my bare skin. I sat for a moment

and let the water hit me as I watched it flow down the drain. The water was a nasty rainbow of colors, green and brown, brown and red as the muck washed off my body. I tilted my head back into the water. I attempted to run my hands through my hair but was met with an army of snarls. I let the water run through my hair and untangled it as best I could. On a ledge below the shower head there was a bar of soap. I reached for it and rubbed it between my hands to create suds. I ran the soap across my body and washed the remainder of the dirt and forest debris from my arms and legs. I used caution while I washed my torso gently washing my wound at the side. I raised my hands and closed my eyes as I went to wash my face. The soap slipped from my hand and landed on the floor with a light thud. I leaned forward, just as I did the chair tipped forward dumping me onto the tile floor. I waited for the feeling of dizziness to wear off before I got up. I pulled myself up and bent back up. To my despair I hit the back of my head on the ledge that held the soap. I fell to my knees and breathed out, "Just my luck," before I was swallowed up by a tunnel of darkness.

To be honest I wasn't even sure if I was awake. The feeling of consciousness was dream like. I was climbing an endless rope of sleep trying to reach reality. It was so empty and lonely. Whatever "it" was. It was unbelievably surreal. Was I dead? Did I damage my brain when I hit the tile? An endless slumber, is that death? If so it will drive me to madness.

My eyelids fluttered open inviting in bright white light into my eyes. I squinted. Next I hear a sound ringing in my ear, steadily growing louder. Beep...Beep...Beep...My eyes adjusted to the light and I opened them fully. I noticed a lady at the foot of my bed, she looked oddly familiar. It was Dr. Mallard. She looked different, she looked older. Was that even possible? Her face stricken with more wrinkles and her hair was almost pure silver. She gazed up at me, then back down, and then snapped her head back up to me. "My god, you're awake." She said with great shock. "What do you mean, awake?" I said in confusion. She responded, "Oh golly dear, you've been in a coma for the past nine months. The blow to your head caused severe head and brain damage. Which would have been treatable permitted that you did not already have swelling in your brain. I recalled the day in the shower when I dropped the soap and hit my head. I asked, "How is my head now, and if I've been asleep for nine months, why am I so tired?" All knowingly Dr. Mallard replied, "Yes, it is common for coma patients to feel tired. It's due to over sleeping. That is the one good thing that came out of your shower incident. This nine month time period, in which your brain was practically inactive allowed your brain and head to make a full recovery." "That's great! So when can I be released from this sanitary prison?" Dr. Mallard let out a chuckle, "Well dear, your brain has made a full recovery but you'll need to stay here one more day for final testing. Just to be safe. It's nearly one o'clock in the morning. "Go back to sleep, after my nine months of hibernation?" I decided not to argue and close my eyes. Dr. Mallard turned out the lights and left me with my thoughts.

I didn't sleep too well that night. Tossing and turning seemed to be all I could do. Eventually a strip of sun showed through a gap in the curtains landing right on my face. Its warmth felt remarkable. I wasn't connected to the machines anymore, so I decided to get up and shower. I sat up and got out of bed...no dizziness. I walked into the bathroom, looked myself in the mirror, and said, "Everything seems to be fine and I'm leaving today." I took my shower and was extremely careful. I got out of the shower in one piece. As I exited Dr. Mallard's arsenal of nurses were waiting for me. They performed their final tests and scans and told me I was free to go. "Finally," I exhaled in relief. Dr. Mallard wished me good luck and told me my ride was waiting for me outside. I walked out the sliding doors of the hospital entrance. I stopped and let the warm sunlight engulf me. I took a deep breath as I had not smelled fresh air in so long. Air that was not contaminated with the stench of hand sanitizer. I stood there a moment then heard my name being called by a voice I had never been so happy to hear. "Addilyn, Addilyn, come on let's go. I ran to mom and embraced her in a tight hug, "I haven't seen you in so long, I missed you so much." "I know honey. I tried to visit you when you weren't in your coma but the doctor told me it would put you at risk. But they did let me visit you while you were in a coma. You scared me so much sweetheart." I replied "It's ok, I understand, but let's go home." We both got in her car and drove away. As we did we passed a sign that read *Mallard Hospital* (P.M.I). "Of course." I whispered that's where I recognized the name Mallard.

About fifteen minutes later we arrived at our little one story yellow prairie house. It felt amazing to be home. On the front steps sat one of my old friends, Jamie. We had known each other since we were toddlers and hung out every day after school. It had been so long since the last time I'd seen him. He had changed so much. He was one year younger than me, but now he looked as if he was three years older than me. The baby fat had left his face. Instead of wearing his rusty brunette colored hair down, it was gelled up in messy spikes. He looked like he had grown at least half a foot and had been working out. I exited my mom's car and walked up our sidewalk. I stood in front of Jamie and he rose to his feet. He embarrassed me so tight he was crushing my lungs. "Guess you have been working out," I teased as I patted his back. "Sorry Addliyn, still trying to get used to my new found strength. With no one to hang out with, I took up a new hobby, lifting," Jamie said as he flexed his forearm at me. We both chuckled and smiled at each other. "I missed you," I breathed into his chest as I gave him one last hug. Jamie, my mom and I all walked into the house. "Happy Birthday by the way. How old are you now?" I said to Jamie. "Thanks Addliyn. And I'm seventeen now." We all went to the living room and caught up with each other. After about an hour Jamie and I headed to my room. I took a seat on the bed while Jamie looked out my window. "What happened that day in the forest? Do you remember anything at all?" he interrogated. "I don't know Jamie," I got up and walked over to him, "all I remember is running and being so scared. Jamie, whatever I was running from was awful. Then I heard gun shots. Then nothing." Changing the subject he replied, "You need to have some fun. Why don't we go for one of our usual hiking trips? I found this new trail; it's

absolutely stunning during this time of year.” “That sounds great Jamie. Can we go tomorrow,” I asked. He told me, “Perfect. Tomorrow morning say eight-thirty. I’ll pick you up,” and with that Jamie hugged me one last time and set off for home. I waved good-bye to him out the window. For the first time in forever I took a look at the calendar. It was Thursday July 12th. It was seven-thirty pm and I decided to shower and go to bed.

It felt so good to sleep in my own bed with the scent of Downy rocking me to sleep. I slept like a rock. I awoke the next morning to the sun shining across my floor and the birds chirping. I glanced at my clock. It was seven-thirty. I got out of bed walked to my closet and picked out an outfit. Since it was summer I decided to wear shorts and a T-shirt. I put on my hiking shoes, which were really just an old pair of Converse. I went into the bathroom and continued with my morning routine. I brushed my teeth, washed my face, rolled on some deodorant, and put my hair into a braided pony tail. I went down the hall and made myself breakfast. My mom was still asleep. Jamie arrived at eight-thirty. I wrote my mom a note and hung it on the fridge. Locked my front door behind me and got into Jamie’s two seated cab truck.

“So where are you taking me exactly?” I questioned. Jamie told me, “It’s an old country road right outside of town. It will take us about forty minutes to get there.” “Sounds good to me,” I told him. On the way there we listened to music and sang our favorite songs together. After about thirty five minutes of driving we passed a sign that read *Now Leaving Alton, IL*²². “Hey muscles, how much longer ‘til we get there?” I teased. “Be patient, about ten more minutes,” he chuckled back. Ten minutes later Jamie pulled over on the side of a dirt road. I exited the car, stretched, and looked around. We were surrounded by a vast sea of tall grass fields on our right. To my left there was an endless sunny forest. In the middle of the wall of trees there was a dirt path that ran all the way down to the horizon. I heard Jamie shut the end of his truck and throw a bag around his back. “What you got there?” He remarked back, “Water and snacks.”

We began to walk down the path talking and catching up with each other. By the time I was caught up on all the gossip we had walked about half a mile. “Perfect, we’re almost there,” exclaimed Jamie. “Where is ‘there’ exactly?” I asked. Jamie replied with great excitement, “It’s this beautiful meadow, you’ll see, come on follow me. It’s right through here.” Jamie veered off the path going to the right of it. Without much thought I followed him. We made our way through the maze of large tree trunks. Next thing I knew I crossed into a wide space of green grass heavily sprinkled with a variety of flowers. When you looked ahead high above the trees you could see the mountains. “Close your mouth” Jamie said pulling me back to reality. “This place is astonishing. Absolutely beautiful,” I said in awe. Jamie and I walked to the center of the meadow and took a seat in the lush green grass. A light breeze swept through the meadow. Jamie removed his backpack and handed me some water and a granola bar. I thanked him,

² Most superstitious city in the U.S

“This is great Jamie. I really needed this. It’s so refreshing and renewing to get outside.” Humbly he said, “It’s really no problem. I know you needed this.” We sat in silence for a while and continued to eat our snacks. A few minutes passed and a rustle came from the thick brush to our left. With bated breath we rose to our feet. Suddenly a buck jumped from the bushes. We exhaled in great relief. We looked at the magnificent creature that stood before us. Atop its head was a massive set of antlers that looked like perfectly symmetrical tree branches. As we gazed in awe a bang rang through our ears.

In a matter of seconds I let out a scream, the buck took off in terror, and I heard a thud next to me. Jamie was on the ground. A growing patch of red was coming from his side. I dropped to my knees in horror. “Jamie, Oh god! Jamie can you hear me? Oh, no Jamie. We have to go!” I yelled as I tried to stop the bleeding. The cloud cover was growing heavier now shading the meadow. “I’ll be ok Addy. I promise. A hunter probably missed the buck and shot me by accident.” Jamie said slowly, as he barely held on to consciousness. “Jamie don’t even think about falling asleep on me. Keep talking to me and don’t shut your eyes,” I demanded while tears streamed down my cheeks.

A dark shadow appeared over Jamie and I. Above me stood a man in camouflage pants and jacket. “Oh, my god, what have I done? I can’t believe I shot someone. Please let me help you get him to the hospital.” The man said flustered. I was hesitant at first but every second Jamie was losing more blood. I had no choice and I agreed, “Ok thank you, but we need to hurry. We left his truck about a half a mile back. Follow me.”

The hunter picked up Jamie with ease and tossed him over his shoulder. We headed off in the same direction from which Jamie and I came. The huntsman and I ran down the trail trying to make every second count. After what seemed like an eternity we reached the trail head. Quickly we made our way over to the truck. The man laid Jamie down in the bed of the truck. “You drive and I’ll stay back here with him,” said the hunter. I got in and slammed the door and turned the keys in the ignition. I did a u-turn kicking up dust and gravel. I looked back at the forest. It seemed oddly ominous. The threshold of the trees grew ever darker. Something was off, but I didn’t have time to worry about that. “Hey, slow down. It won’t do us any good if you crash the truck and kill us all,” the hunter advised me. I read that I was doing eighty five miles per hour and slowed to seventy five.

“What’d you say your name was?” the hunter asked. “I’m Addilyn and that’s Jamie,” I told the man as I looked in the rear view mirror. What I saw next could not have been possible. The man’s face changed. He had huge black eyes, with no white surrounding his pupil. His mouth had opened wide showing a set of six rows of pointed teeth. He had no nose anymore. And the color of his skin was no longer the russet color it had been before. Now it was a ghostly pale white, like marble. But then his face went back to how it had been before. It’s just stress I told

myself...that's all. Jamie will be ok, we just need to make haste and get him to a hospital. When Jamie and I were driving up this dirt road I had not taken note of what was on the sides of it. On both sides of this road were trees...tall skinny ones. But they were so close together it looked like they had been merged into one. The sky grew gloomier. The silence grew heavier. It was almost too quiet. Even the wind that was being cut through by the car had seemed hushed. Out of nowhere the man began to talk again. "I'm Samael³³ by the way. I'm terribly sorry for what has happened to your friend. "Nice to meet you. But I wish we could have met in some other circumstance less grim than this one. And I suppose the cops will decide on the consequences," I said in impatience. Jamie was in the back slowing dying, and this man was trying to make small talk with me. I looked back in my rear view mirror again. His face had changed again now. This time the new face lingered, and I knew that it wasn't the stress bothering me. There was something terribly wrong with this man, if you could even call him a man. Not only had his face changed but his body had morphed as well. Below his head the top of his torso showed but then where his belly should have been there was no skin or muscle at all. Instead it was just his spine connecting to his legs. His legs had no clearly visible knees and at the bottom was a pair of hooves that had been cut and were bleeding. It was a mortifying sight. That thing was back there right now with my best friend. I have to ignore it, I need to act natural. If that thing finds out that I suspect something Jamie and I will have a slim chance of earning escape. I heard an unearthly sound. One that I had never heard before or ever want to hear again. It was a type of screeching mixed with a hiss. Like a dying animal that could not pass away, forever whining in pain. It was Samael. But was that even his real name? Was that even a real person? Or was it a mirage put on by the demonic thing now perched above Jamie's ever still lying body. Paying as good attention to the road as I could while I remained calm. Once more I glanced in the rear view mirror back at Jamie. His eyes held no more light. He wasn't blinking anymore, nor was his chest heaving up and down as it had done so before. He lay as still as a bee in the winter. Jamie was dead.

Tears welled in my eyes and ran down my face like a stream. My vision became blurry then clear again due to the welling of tears in my eyes. Why? Why Jamie? Why was all of this happening in the first place? How does something like that thing in the back even exist? There were a million questions racing through my mind simultaneously. Then I made the hardest decision of my life. I opened the car door. Then jumped.

The car went speeding down the road at seventy- five miles per hour. It crashed not to long later in a nearby ravine. I got up and began to run into the cover of the trees. I had managed to escape the harsh dirt road with only a couple small cuts and bruises. I looked behind me. The truck was smoking. Jamie was in the back of it lying lifeless. I had left him, left him in the blink

³The grim reaper in Jewish mythology

of an eye. I never gave a second thought to my decision. The demon was no longer in the back of the truck. Hopefully he had been flung out of the truck and critically injured. Slowly dying a painful death. He deserved it. Especially because of what he had done to Jamie. Taking his life away when he still had so much of it to live.

I ran deeper into the forest and got a feeling of Déjà Vu. I recognized this forest. I had been here before. The forest grew darker, like it was trying to conceal me in its branches. All I could think about was escaping death. I felt sorry for Jamie and mourned over him as I ran. Finally I could run no more and decided I could take a short break. I probably left that horrible creature a ways back. As I stopped and looked around I recognized the forest.

Before I was in the hospital I was here. In this exact same forest. I had left a school dance early and decided to take a drive on a random road. The road led me to this stretch of tress. At the time I pulled my car over to where Jamie's truck was crashed right now. Then I walked into the forest, enjoying the moonlit walk. That's when I started to run and hear the gunshots. I don't recall where I heard the gunshots come from or seeing who had fired them. But why was I here now and for the second time. What keeps leading me to this eerie forest? What kept forcing me to end up here? A whoosh of wind ran by me. It was so fast and powerful it turned me around. I became disoriented and had no idea which way I had been running. A branch cracked behind me. Quickly I turned and there was no one. The cracking of the branch was still coming from this direction. Slowly I looked up.

Samael was perched high in the treetops on a dead tree branch. Now he had dark wings that spanned across what I would guess was five feet on each side. He stared at me with his dark eyes. His mouth watering and foam was spilling out the side of it. "WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?" I screamed at the thing. He swooped down from the trees and landed on the ground with such force it rattled me. He lifted a jagged claw, pointing at me. I turned and ran. Here and there I would look back and he would be gaining on me. But he wasn't running, he was walking. He transported himself closer to me every second. In the distance I saw a shed. I picked up my running speed even more. My legs were carrying me as fast as they could and then some. I neared the shed and the door was hanging open. I ran into it and slammed the door behind me. I stopped in front of it hoping Sameal would leave me alone. I stood at the door jamb for an eternity. It was silent outside. "Maybe he left me," I whispered as quiet as I could. I opened my eyes which I had realized had been shut in fear ever since I entered the shed. It was an old one. Made out of wood and nails, it was slowly beginning to decay. It was not very big at all. Just barely big enough to fit a smart car I'd say. On the wall opposite of me hung an old wilting piece of paper. I walked over to get a closer look. It was a list of names written in a dark black font. There were many names written. The ones at the top of the list were faded suggesting they

were written a long time ago. At the bottom of the list the names were darker. They had been written more recently. All the names had lines scratched through them.

~~Christine Martin~~

~~Alexander Hoover~~

~~Daniel Mandoza~~

~~Jamie O'neil~~

~~Addilyn Mortem~~

The sight of my name as well as Jamie's on this list froze my blood where it flowed through my veins. It was some sort of death row list. I recognized the name that was last to be crossed out before Jamie's. It was a kid that went missing about a year ago. He went on a Boy Scout trip and never came back from it. For awhile that was all the town could talk about. The door slammed open. Samael stood in the doorway. I was frozen in terror and could not make so much a twitch in my fingers. Thoughts raced through my mind. One in particular stood out. My name was the last on the list. Maybe if I die Sameal will stop killing innocent people. Maybe after the last name is crossed out it will be all over. I decided that sacrificing my life so that the killings come to a permanent halt is what I needed to do. A bullet sounded. Piercing my side. Then another one in my leg. Another to my other leg. I collapsed, falling on my knees. But they weren't bullets. It only sounded like bullets. Sameal was really shooting daggers into me. One more loud crack was the last thing I heard. Sameal shot one last dagger straight into my chest. I looked at the list and my name was scratched out. "It's all over now. No one can get hurt anymore," I said with my final breath. Before I was trapped by darkness the wind blew the list of names off the nail it hung on. Only to reveal a new sheet of paper with freshly inscribed names. My eyes grew wide. No it can't be. A tear ran down my face.