

## The Wrong Turn

*Ella Sager Bacchus*

Lockdown. We all hate it. Sometimes you just need to take a breather and to take a break from everything. Leave the technology. Get ready. Go for a walk to cure lockdown boredom. So that is what I decided to do. Our minds flood with overthinking and anxiety 24/7. Hence me wanting to throw away my thoughts and take my mind for a wander.

Eagerly, the sun decided it was time for me to wake up, so it glared through my window. I progressively became more awake after hours of contemplating if I should get up. I removed the duvet that had been enveloping me and I put on a positive mindset. The weekend had finally arrived, meaning no work. I can relax. Take a break. Go for a walk. We all need to relax at times, especially after a challenging week fulfilled with stress. I sat up in my bed and my head spun like a carousel singing music, filling the fairground air. I plodded downstairs to take anti-biotics with the leftover drinks from the night before. Pulsating, blood pounded in my head, I needed air. I went back to my room and got dressed to leave my uni accommodation. I get to my car, blast music and vibe as I drive to the woods in the vicinity of my university.

I step out of the car and my feet make a crispy sound as they put pressure on the pebble grey gravel underneath them. My ears were graced with the opera swimming out of bird's beaks. The smell of the freshly cut grass inhaled into my lungs as I could taste the alcohol from last night. It's all a blur really. Do any of us really remember anything? It all comes to an abrupt end at some point.

I pace into the tranquil woods as an escape from reality. I feel the frisky grass caressing my ankles as I step deeper into the gloomy woodland, further and further from any kind of civilisation. Anger fires up in me as my earphones

keep trying to jump out of my ears. After minutes of aggravation, I decide to listen to my music aloud. The stinging wind roared through the atmosphere and unwillingly covered my rosy skin in miniscule goosebumps. The chartreuse intricately shaped leaves on the towering, mahogany tree trunks harmoniously danced through the chilling air, as they made a descent towards the azure bluebell filled ground.

Unaware, I had lost track of time and it was almost time for my next lecture, so I started making my way back to the empty carpark. I thoroughly enjoyed having some time to myself to clear my head of life's worries. My body unexpectedly began trembling from the intimidating breeze in the air.

Tranquillity. All the birds have taken a break from singing. I hear no cars on the road near me. I hear nothing. Complete silence. Anxiety overcomes me slightly, but I brush it off as nothing. My surroundings are dim and unrecognisable. I have not been paying attention. I do not know where I am.

I was certain that I was retracing my steps. Evidently not. I get my phone out so I can use the maps to try and locate the way back. There is no signal. I do not know what to do. Thud. Thud. Thud. My heartrate is sprinting. My palms have gone clammy. My breathing rapidly increases. I am lost. Panic has hit me like a truck. Terrifying thoughts are racing around in my mind. I decide the best thing to do is walk in one direction as I should eventually come out somewhere.

Step after step after step. It feels like I am walking around aimlessly. The amber sun is inventively hiding below the horizon and the aura of light is dimming by the minute. The last thing I want is to be stuck in the woods, in the dark, all alone. I squint to try and see ahead of me as I can only just see what appears to be a place of inhabitancy in the distance. In faith, I nervously walk towards it, hoping there is someone I can ask for assistance. As it becomes nearer to me, I detect that it is just a shed, slowly I lose all my hope. My hand touches the hazel wood door, and it squeaks ajar. I am absolutely

horrified by what I am seeing. An atrocious stench makes me gag. It is horrendous. Petrified, my eyes have been scarred by what I see. There is a pile. A sea of bodies. All on top of each other. Mutilated by cuts and burns. Some would be unrecognisable if you knew them. Their clothes were torn aggressively. Deep red blood stained the ground below them. Their tarnished skin was covered in gashes from some kind of blade. Their skin was crisp from burns. The lifeless bodies just lay there. I was in utter disbelief. I froze. My legs went numb. Tears trailed down my face.

There were kids there. Innocent children who have had their lives ripped away from them by a cold-blooded psychopath. Whoever has done this needs to be locked up for life. How could someone bring themselves to commit such a morbid act? I can see in a backroom and there lay another lifeless body of a young girl handcuffed to a rusting metal pole. Her matted brunette hair was plastered onto her face in thick, dry, blood. I wanted to throw up. I have never felt a feeling like this horror before.

I need to leave. I turn around hoping to run as far away as possible. I see an apparition. Tall. Big built. Muscular. All hope of me returning to uni slowly drained from my body. Is this it? The abrupt end. I have some faith in myself that I can get away and stop this creature stealing more lives. I try to run. He runs quicker. I feel a big thud as my face is cemented into the ground.

Darkness. My drooping eyes start widening as I come to the realisation that I am trapped. My body is in immense pain. My hands tied. My legs tied. This is it. No more humanity. No more life. No more of anything.

Do not take the wrong turn. Always know your way back.