

Neve

I paced back and forth, waiting for answers, but none came. My reflection seemed to watch me with a sad and curious expression. I knew I'd have to stop pacing from question to question soon. I willed some force to disrupt the pacing and create a new excuse to stop. I was losing my grip on time, not having the slightest idea how long I had been pacing for, my mind racing for answers. Nothing was going to break the barrier, nor put meaning to my thoughts. I had to do *something*. I halted in the middle of the room, still without answers, but anything was better than relentless pacing. I glanced at the mirror once more. My reflection still held the same sad, curious look.

Compelled by something I couldn't put a finger on, I bolted out of the room, out of the house, and into the yard. I hadn't even realized how much I had missed fresh air, since... well since whenever the pacing began. Slowly, I made my way to the gate, opening it cautiously, as if the moment the latch was lifted it would all start again. As I started to regain control of myself, I quickly walked out, into the street.

Expecting to emerge into a much more strange or terrifying version of my neighborhood, I was shocked to see everything the way it always had been and always would be. Houses built in a manner that was anything but perfect and far from comforting. Thick trees that blocked out most of the moonlight, leaving a dim, eerie glow to hover over the street. I began to run, in hopes of escaping the creepy, familiar feeling of my street.

In near full control now, I sprinted towards the woods but tripped about halfway down the block on one of the road's many potholes. Hurriedly, picking myself up I continued down the street, towards the dead end sign and towards the thick, dense trees.

Once breaking free of my neighborhood and the awful, familiar feeling I had grown to know all too well, I could finally think clearly, though I couldn't help but wonder if this whole night was the first time in my life I had ever, truly thought clearly. Despite the relief stemming from my cleared mind, and new found freedom, I knew anyone else wouldn't see it that way, not in their mind at least.

This new feeling wouldn't last long, and there were bound to be consequences for my seemingly wretched actions. So I did the only thing I could come up with and kept running. Deeper and deeper into the woods I went, until trails turned to untread pathways, which then became bramble. I did my best to navigate through the bushes, vines, and trees, tangling, untangling, and retangling myself in the brush. Pulling off what must have been the hundredth burr that night, I had made it, made it to somewhere no one, not even those who thought of themselves as close to me would guess to search.

I gazed up at the treehouse in admiration, thanking a younger version of myself for giving me a way out of the consequences and a place to hide. Here, maybe the new feeling and new freedom could last forever. I knew that was a lie, but the treehouse was safe enough for the night and far better than prison.