

TO THE WOODS

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PROLOGUE:

A young man was walking through the forest, unaware of what he would find. The trees started getting taller and taller when they normally were supposed to be getting thinner because he was heading towards the village in the plain hills, or so he thought. He suddenly found a large bare circle where the trees grew so high around it that he could hardly see the sky at all. Bones of humans and animals scattered around the bald patch of the forest. He then realized that there were no flowers, not even weeds, that both usually scattered the forest. As he turned to go back and tell the village of the discovery, he stepped on an elk skull. The shattering crunch echoed through the forest for what seemed like a hundred times. Then, he heard something behind the bushes. Something big. It started grunting, and its shadow seemed so hidden amongst the trees. When the grunting stopped, the young man thought he was safe, and turned to run, when out of nowhere, the beast pounced on his back, long claws sunk into the flesh rapidly. A blood curdling scream echoed across the forest. The screams died away. The 10 foot tall monster then dragged his prey into the darkness of the trees.

CHAPTER 1:

Alex is 17 years old, and will soon be going to college, so she enjoys spending her last year with the dog rescue team. She has been on this team for 2 ½ years now, with her brilliant young puppy, Blue. For the first 6 months of her job she had to use a volunteer dog because Blue was only a small puppy and was being trained. But after that, they were both set. Alex and Blue had an inseparable bond, and would spend every day together. Alex was a *very* smart young girl, and often didn't go to school because she already had many scholarships and her job was almost full time. But, despite it all, Alex and Blue **loved** their jobs, and when they would get home, they would still spend *many* hours in the backyard playing and doing obstacle courses. Even when Alex was filling out paperwork, or admitting volunteers, Blue would be right by her side, if not, then in her lap.

The rescue mission started with a report from hikers, they heard screaming and monstrous noises. Alex cut through the vines and proceeded to move forward, eyes searching for any clue, Blue was following her sniffing the ground occasionally stopping to go to the bathroom or eat a plant. Alex then came along a patch filled with bones and almost no sunlight came through the thick trees, a stench came from the bushes, Alex took out her dart gun and signaled for Blue to sniff it out. Blue got close to the bush, sniffing rapidly. Blue quickly raised her head and started barking rapidly, with ears back, giving the signal of danger. Alex raises her dart gun automatically, with 4 other rescue members and dogs behind her.

As they move closer, they start to hear moving all around them as if there was an invisible stampede running by. The thing is, is that they

could not single out a source of the noise because it was coming from all directions. All 5 rescue members were stumbling all around, some tripping on bones, as they swung their dart guns around. The dogs were no different, barking in all directions. Suddenly, the movement stopped.

CHAPTER 2:

They all paused for a moment or two. Alex's heart was pounding so hard, she thought it might come straight through her chest. Her breathing was heavy, and even though she tried to slow down and get a hold of herself, she couldn't.

Breath, just breathe... Blue, where's Blue?

"BLUE!!"

All of a sudden, a 10 foot tall, pale green beast jumped out of the bushes, with a rattling roar. The rescue members stumbled with their guns out of terror, but those who were able to raise them seemed to lose all strength when pointing at the monster. But that isn't why Alex dropped her gun. The beast had hit Blue with a hand the size of a table. The dog lay on the side lines whimpering with large scratches along her body. One of the rescue members was able to shoot the threat in the eye. There was a startlingly loud scream, as if the monster had swallowed a dumpster full of glass by mistake. Several other members of the rescue team were able to take aim and drive the monster back. After the beast was scared away, they all ran to Alex and Blue. Alex was sobbing over the dog as the members came all around her. Some were still holding their guns and looking into the unknown brush. One of the members radioed for an emergency helicopter to come and pick them up.

Within minutes, they heard the chopping of a helicopter nearby. One of the members shot a flare gun, and the helicopter lowered the ladder. But the members said that a dog was injured, and they needed them to land.

CHAPTER 3:

Blue laied in the medical room unconscious as the surgeons began to work. The wounds were bad, and Blue was rushed back to the station where there were surgents waiting. After an hour or 2, some of Alex's close friends tore her away from the large glass window, where Blue could hardly be seen through all the blankets covering her.

sniff

“Comon Alex, you need to eat. Blue will be ok, she's strong.”

Alex's best friend, Olivia, and her dog, Nova, came over with a plate of roasted chicken and green beans and cooked carrots. **The National Dog Rescue Team** had an after hour cook that would stay and cook food for the members that have to stay a while longer. Olivia was there since Alex started training at the rescue center, they were good friends for a very long time. Olivia and Alex used to live in the same neighborhood when they were young and knew each other before they were friends.

“Your parents called. They said that they are coming later tonight. Your dad's still at work, but he's trying to leave early. And your mom is in a cooking class.”

Alex's dad was a firefighter, and her mom was a dietitian. They all loved Blue, to the last splinter of their hearts. When Alex found Blue, Blue was in the shelter, but before that she was found on the streets. It was hard to

imagine a dog with such talents was left to rot with the trash, or to be mistakenly hit by a car.

Alex refused to leave the window on which she watched upon her beloved dog slowly slipping away from her. The other rescue members that were on the call stayed with Alex. That's the thing about joining the dog rescue team. You become family. There's some sort of bond between the team. That's one of the things Alex loved most about the dog team. But she loved Blue more.

Alex starts to slowly count her puppies heart beat.

BEEP...BEEP...BEEP
BEEP....BEEP....BEEP
BEEP.....BEEP.....BEEP
BEEP.....BEEP.....BEEP
BEEP.....BEEP.....BEEP

The surgents door opened, on which came out a stumbling Blue, eagerly making her way to Alex. Alex broke down sobbing, and clenched the small pup as if she would never let her go again.

CHAPTER 4:

Alex rushed through the forest once again, following her path the day before, Blue was not there instead a volunteer dog named Cuis-Cuis followed her. Blue needed rest and had to be left behind, she then again stumbled across the plain bone filled patch. She quickly gathered her mini pistol and a variety of dart guns and weapons. Alex was covered in a thick

vest that would protect her well, as were the 12 other people behind her. She searched around in every bush and activated her heat sensing goggles.

Alex was confused, she saw hundreds, maybe even thousands of figures darting around stalking the group. But something was different, these creatures were *invisible*, and they were not emitting heat. Instead the creature's bodies were cold as stone. One monster had a large Warm part on its claws. Suddenly Alex realized, Those weren't claws, that was a member of the rescue team. Alex looked in shock as she realized there was only one monster. "How is that possible??? IS it so fast it's creating afterimages?" Alex thought in wonder. The body collapsed and the creature was suddenly gone, it slowly picked off one by one of the members until only Alex was left. The dogs ran off back to the Rescue Center. Even Cuis-Cuis was gone. Alex panicked as she looked around in horror. The monster was unseeable and quickly disoriented Alex, she turned around to only see the monster lunge right at her.

CHAPTER 5:

Alex panicked, and ran to the right. The large untrimmed claws the length of a leg, scratched her face. She fell hard on the cold forest floor. Her radio fell off her belt and hit a jagged rock. Alex watched in horror as it shattered into pieces. She was alone. She was all alone. She quickly lunged to the left as the beast came at her once more. Alex tried to get out of the circle.

Get out of the circle, if I can get into the forest, the trees. I could lose it in the trees.

As Alex started sprinting towards the opening, the beast jumped over her, landing only feet away. This is the first time Alex saw the threat clearly for the first time. It had the same palish - green skin, which gave Alex a sickening feeling as she recalled the previous events. It had a strong stench

that smelled of rotted bodies of prey. It had eyes the size of dinner plates, with a dingy yellow tint. The beast had sharp nub-like bones sticking out of its back. The creature had to be at least 10 feet tall, and 5 feet wide. It snarled at Alex, planning its next move. All of a sudden, it was gone. The heat sensing goggles were drooping down on Alex's face, revealing a blue blur, zooming around. Then, it stopped. Alex looked left and right, up and down, trying to find it.

CHAPTER 6:

She then froze, as she heard the demons call behind her. She slowly turned in terror, until she was no more than 3 feet away from the monster. It jumped. It jumped *high*. Probably 20 feet up, Alex knew she wouldn't live. She closed her eyes and thought of her family, and how much she loved them. She thought of Olivia, and Nova. She thought about how the rescue team had been her dream for so long, and finally made it to where she had been so dedicated to her job that it would actually bring her to where she was no more.

But she was ok with that. The only thing she wasn't ok with was that the last time she saw Blue was when she was barely conscious and wrapped in bandages.

Mom. Dad. Olivia. Nova. My team...

Blue.

“BLUE!”

When the monster was only a few feet away from smashing Alex, a flash of a blue-ish-gray dog with black spots flung by, and hit the beast square in the chest! The demon was pushed back by so much force that blood splattered out, but Alex couldn't find where it came from. Alex heard nearby barking and many people coming fast through the thick brush.

Alex’s vision went blurry. She was so focused on thinking about the ones she would lose to notice the large gash on her leg. Blood was flowing out rapidly. She saw blurry figures in human form with guns, and several dogs barking spontaneously. She turned her head with pain to see The monster being pushed back, not just by the bullets and darts, but by *Blue*. Alex had never seen Blue this aggressive. She was snarling and ripping bits of flesh off of the roaring beast. Alex heard a loud **THUD** and a moaning whimper. The monster was able to throw Blue off *literally*. Alex wanted to run to Blue, to help her.

Get up. Please, Blue, get up! Please!

Alex felt multiple hands grab her, hug her. She heard medics unroll their stretcher. People started to lift her up, but she regained full vision, and could now see everything clearly. She now saw that the people hugging her were her parents. She saw medics preparing the stretcher. She saw the dog rescue team taking aim, and (surprisingly) S.W.A.T members were also firing. She saw Blue attacking the monster with pure rage, but was losing`´`. Alex found her voice, and started yelling,

“NO! BLUE! STOP, PLEASE, SOMEONE HELP HER!”

She broke through the grasp of the paramedics and tried to run but fell down eminently through pain. But despite the pain, she got up and tried to reach her beloved dog. The demon swung its hand and took out 10 soldiers before reaching Blue and its claws were feet away from Blue's head. Alex blinked and Olivia stood in front of them protecting her. The paw hit and Olivia was flung back and hit the ground. Alex stood in shock as Olivias body lay on the ground in a small puddle of red.

Many of the team members shot their pistols and dart guns, the demon roaring in pain and swinging its arms taking down many of the

people who fought. Alex couldn't move, she was stunned and the paramedics lifted her up on the stretcher and closed the doors. The last thing she saw was a lifeless body on the ground.

“NO!!!”

CHAPTER 7:

When Alex woke up, she was in a bright white room, with dark, blurry figures standing by her. One of them was talking with another holding a clipboard. Her vision was blurry but it adjusted soon enough.

Alex saw bright, white lights, and tried to sit up, but something was aching and stinging, so instead she let out a gasp of pain.

The unknown shape that was talking jumped, froze, then broke down crying, and lunged into Alex.

“ALEX! Oh thank god you're alive! Oh Alex...”

Alex felt the familiar touch and recognized it as her mother. Alex looked around some more. She saw her father, who looked like he might faint over relief, but he somehow was able to keep standing. His eyes were like a broken water hydrants, leaking everywhere. She then saw that the person with the clipboard was a nurse. Suddenly, Alex's thoughts all came back to her, but so did her memory.

“Olivia. Blue... where are they? Are they ok? Did they survive? Did we win?”

“SShhhhh... calm down... please Alex...”

“NO! Please, tell me! Are they ok? *PLEASE* mom...! Please...”

Alex’s mom gave a weary smile and moved to the side. There stood the incredible rebel Olivia, wrapped in bandages all over, and wearing crutches. And right by her side stood Nova, sitting tall and proud, wagging her tail. Alex’s eyes began to sting with hot pain.

“Olivia! Nova!”

“Alex!”

Olivia struggled to move forward, but managed. When she was close enough, Olivia collapsed onto Alex. Alex felt a sharp pain, but didn't mind. Nova came to the bed obediently, and Alex reached down to pet her. But as soon as Alex felt the fur of a dog, that comforting touch, her mind finally snapped back into place.

“*Blue..* “

“She’s right here,” said her mother with a gentle voice.

No more than a second passed from when her mother said those final words of love and when Alex looked straight and saw Blue mid air. The dog’s tongue was flying out of the pup's mouth. Alex grabbed the flying pooch and hugged her close.

CHAPTER 8:

Alex was now in her boss's office, giving her report on the beast. Alex found a hidden document on a beast that was very similar to the

demon they fought before, she pinned the page and finished her report. The boss was a middle aged man, no more than 40 - 45 years old. When upon entering the office, she smelled an awful stench. His room was darker than usual. He glared at her with yellow tinted eyes, she handed over the thick paper. He looked it through, but hardly glanced at it, as if reading the inch thick stack only took seconds.

He turned around to get the 'approval stamp', meaning that Alex completed her report. As he turned around, Alex saw that the man's back was arched, with vertebrates so tight around the skin, they looked like they were about to pop out. Alex got a sickening feeling, but didnt know why. She'd always been a little nervous before turning in a report, but that wasn't it. Blue started whimpering, as if she was thinking the same thing as Alex.

"Too bad you didn't get the species of the creature. Or atleast a picture."

"Yes, well, that's that's true true... but we still have the location, and some know what it looks like li- wait... how come you weren't there? When we were trying to kill it?"

"Oh silly girl... I *was* there."



TOP LEFT:

This is Alex. Alex is a 17 year old girl, with red hair. She works at **The National Dog Rescue Center**, which goes on rescue missions to try and save lives. Alex is always accompanied by her beloved dog, Blue.

TOP RIGHT:

This is Blue. Blue is a two year old blue heeler that are typically used for herding cattle. Blue is a rescue dog, and companies Alex in their missions.

TOP MIDDLE:

This is Olivia. Olivia is a 17 year old rebel, who is also Alex's best friend (besides Blue.). Olivia works for **The National Dog Rescue Team**, and has her brave dog, Nova.

BOTTOM LEFT:

This is Nova. Nova is a three year old sheep dog, and is very obedient. She has been on several crucial missions and saved many lives single handedly. She is cared for by Olivia, who treats Nova caringly.

BOTTOM RIGHT:

This is Cuis Cuis. Cuis Cuis is a golden doodle, and is almost 5 years old, so he doesn't go on many missions. He is a volunteer dog. Alex needed Cuis Cuis' assistance when Blue was absent. Cuis Cuis' real owner is currently retired and couldn't care for him any more. But since Cuis Cuis was on the rescue team, the team took him in to use incase anyones dog was gone.