

“Come on guys! Don’t be wimps!” Alexa and Justin yelled to their friends, almost simultaneously. The day had vanished, leaving Maine covered by a wave of darkness. The sun bid farewell to the gloomy forest, as the pearl of the night shimmered in the sky. Whispering willows and silent sugar maples watched as seven teenagers wandered through the thickets of Waterbel Woods. Wind whistled through the forest and crept around the trees, observing the behaviour of the young children.

“Why did we agree to this?” Cassie said while the others muttered a silent agreement. Creatures had awoken and began to harmonize with the rustling in the bracken. Streams of water danced out of the dirt and rocks, unaware that the teens were the next victims of the torture chamber. “I could have been sitting on my bed, reading my book and having a good time but my friends wanted to go swimming.” Nicole mumbled to no one in particular. Mocking Nicole, Oliver decided it would be a good idea to impersonate her, as though she were deranged. Nicole grimaced at Oliver’s sharp comment, tears filling her eyes.

“Will you shut it Oli?” Victoria suggested firmly.

“Yeah, whatever Vic said.” Noah added, almost as though he was hypnotized by her beauty; the look he gave her indicated that he had fallen face first into something bigger than he could ever imagine.

Leaves rustled over the group, trying to warn them of the dangers that lay ahead. They reached the lake of terror, not knowing that death would follow. Jumping in, Alexa considered the idea of a competition to find out who could hold their breath for the longest time. Reluctantly agreeing, they all dunked their bodies underwater. The icy lake filled the teens with a rush of adrenaline, one by one their lungs urged them towards the surface to draw a breath. Oliver shot up first, Cassie and Noah followed, Justin and Victoria came next and Nicole ascended soon after. One minute passed and Alexa was nowhere to be seen. “Guys I’m worried about her,” Cassie said, her voice shaking with fear, “I think we should look around.”

Searching for Alexa was a success, but not in the way they hoped. The water unveiled her corpse, stab wounds all over her body. The group got out of the lake and started running, all were crying, shaken, and terrified. “We’ve got to get out of here”, Nicole wailed through her tears. The teens sprinted for what seemed like forever until they reached the exit, at least that’s what they thought. Instead of the open clearing that paved the way out, an abandoned house stood menacingly over them, glaring at the children with displeasure. “I don’t think this is the way out.” Oliver said quietly. “Yeah, no kidding Oli! We’re not that stupid.” Victoria shouted out at him.

“We should go back and leave through the gate” Justin advised. That plan was short-lived as the rusted gate slammed behind them, locking the kids inside the property. They pulled and pushed at it to no avail.

“If we’re stuck here, we could explore. We’ll just stick together.” Nicole suggested. Everyone agreed and started walking.

“Where’s the rest of the group?” Oliver asked Nicole and Victoria.

“We are on the path. I think they’re lost.” Victoria replied, her voice growing uncertain. As she said that, screams filled her ears and a few seconds later, Justin came stumbling towards them from the direction of the noise, looking shaken. “They’re dead.” He mumbled. “I saw it happen. It was terrifying. I barely escaped his rampage. We have to go.” They ran back to where the gate was and tried once again to pull it open. Justin

wasn't helping. He just stood behind them, smiling. His next victims were right in front of him, he just had to wait until the time was right.

By EM