

“You just had to ruin my fun.”

Swiftly, he raised a strong hand and grabbed Amber by the throat, drew her back and threw her with a violent force through an opening in the trees.

*If I live through this madness, maybe I should take up flying lessons,* thought Amber morbidly. A tree quickly snuffed out this thought and many others when Amber’s back met the coarse bark—her body momentarily wrapped backward around the tree before crumpling to the ground.

*I’m dead, it’s official. How can I not be? I felt my body break in half! So...then why am I still thinking?* she thought as she slowly moved her body, afraid to open her eyes. Her eyebrows knitted as a metallic-smelling warm breeze brushed her face. But this wasn’t from the wind but rather someone’s breath. Nervously, Amber opened one eye and saw the strangest, yet cutest little monkey she had ever seen.

It stood over her, about two and a half feet tall. Its huge gray eyes, which took up most of its face, leaving no room for a nose or mouth, glowed against its jet black long fur. That left a few questions running through her mind. When did Galaseya get monkeys and where did that warm breeze come from? The once cute little monkey cocked its head to the right as it casually lifted its large, flat tail. The six-foot long beaver-like tail didn’t bother Amber so much as did the razor-sharp teeth protruding from underneath it. This was the creature’s mouth—this was how it fed. The clicking of the teeth, which started with a small hum, now grew to a near roar as Amber quickly crawled out of the creature’s way.

Her heart continued to race as her back bumped into something cold and stiff. Afraid it was yet another monstrous creature, she slowly turned around, not wanting to give it any reason to attack. No...not a creature, something far more disturbing—a hanging corpse. She jumped to her feet as an unearthly scream escaped her lips. Chris’ body hung from a dead tree. Judging by the color of his skin, he had been there for a while. Amber turned in a circle around the dismal foggy clearing she had landed in and noticed several more bodies hanging from other dead trees—each corpse, a member of her family.