

ORGAN MUSIC

SEASON I - PART I

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My tale, I will be the first to admit, is not only completely unbelievable, but as some have said - twisted. It defies logic and reason and I have been accused repeatedly of fabricating the entire thing. Whatever you believe, I implore you to keep an open mind and know that regardless of what you think, I am sincerely glad to be alive to recount the events to you today. Many say that I have lost my mind, whilst others put my experience down to nothing more than a coping mechanism. Nevertheless, I shall recount in the best detail that I can, the events which transpired on the evening of October 18th, 2011.

The aforementioned incident took place on a cold Tuesday evening in the rural County Clare countryside. I'm an accountant by trade and the past few weeks had been some of the most stressful I had experienced in over twenty years in the industry. The firm I worked for were regularly employed by the state to investigate government bodies and any entity receiving tax payers money to make sure everything was above board. As well as that, I was also dealing with some of my own clients on the side. It was a good earner but stressful and this particular Tuesday I was close to wrapping up the Nates account. Long story short, their books were a mess and they needed a hell of a lot of work and it had caused me weeks of sleepless nights but it was finally drawing to a close..

Since I started the Nates account I had taken to driving home a more scenic route to give myself some sort of a break between my firm's work and my private clients when I got home. Those

extra thirty minutes were often what kept me from going insane. There are only so many hours you can spend staring at numbers before it starts to take its toll. I was on a high but my mind was still sifting through every page and document. Being this obsessive and paranoid is what my clients, and the government paid me well for, so it was often quite hard to just shut off. As I drove down a winding lane I checked my watch only to see it was nearly half seven. I snapped out of my day dream realising that I was now on an unfamiliar road - by this stage I should have nearly been home, yet my surroundings were alien to me. I slowed down and tried to pinpoint any landmarks which I could recognise but I was unsuccessful. I checked my rear mirror before pulling over to the side of the narrow road. I reached inside my suit pants pocket to try check Google Maps but my phone wasn't there. Puzzled, I reached over my shoulder into the back seat to pat down my suit jacket which was hanging up on handrail above the window but again I came up empty. I remember doing the rather clichéd stroking of the chin whilst I struggled to remember where I could have misplaced my phone. The only thing I could think of was that I had inadvertently left it in my office as I had rushed out the door after work. Cursing myself, I sat there and tried to decide what to do next - should I continue on the unfamiliar road ahead of me, or backtrack the way I came until I found my bearings. I decided to head back but the road was far too narrow to turn around. Come to think of it, it was that narrow that if I had encountered another vehicle coming towards me neither of us would have enough room to pull in sufficiently to allow the other to pass. I made up my mind to continue forward until there was a driveway or gateway I could use in order to swing back the other direction. Unfortunately, as I soon found out, there was none.

I drove for another ten minutes or so and although I was taking my time, I passed not a single house or other turnoff. I had never experienced this isolation before, anywhere. As rural as

most of Ireland was, there's always a house, or farm or some sort of dwelling around, yet I hadn't even come to a crossroads or turnoff. To add to the confusion, it was now pretty much dark outside. Night rolled in fast enveloping the daylight and leaving nothing only the light from a quarter moon and my cars beams to guide me. It seemed impossibly dark with the headlights struggling to penetrate the blackness and diffusing quickly into the void that filled the space around my car. I tried to think of where I had gone wrong but truth be told I could only recall leaving the office, the rest of the way I had been so lost in thought that I had driven on what must have been autopilot. As I carefully followed the road around a sharp bend and I struggled to see ahead of me. After the next bend to the left the road seemed to straighten and just then, the entire car jolted forward violently, a loud bang erupted from somewhere and I struggled to maintain control as my car bumped and slid all over the road. The back end kicked out and it was nothing but blind luck that stopped me skidding into the ditch which I only noticed at the last moment ran parallel to the road. My car ground to a halt, sideways and almost tethering over the edge of the ditch.

My knuckles were white as my hands remained clenched tight on the steering wheel. I realised that I was holding my breath and remembered to breath again and after I had finished panting, I slowly relaxed back into my seat and began to breath normally. There was a soft ticking sound coming from somewhere under the bonnet - something was still slowly turning, unaware that the rest of the car had come to a stop. I decided to investigate outside. I struggled to release my seatbelt and the door took numerous forceful blows before it opened. There was limited light available but as much as I could see there didn't seem to be any obvious damage to the exterior. The wheels looked a bit off - perhaps the axle had given way but without a torch or my phone I couldn't see underneath the car. I returned and closed the door, relieved to be in the relative safety of the

inside. I turned the key in the ignition and there was a sputtering and grinding sounded before I stopped turning. I tried again and once more the chugging failed to start the engine. I cursed and felt under the dash for the bonnet lever and touched it with the tips of my finger causing the bonnet to pop and sprung up about an inch or so. I went back outside and lifted the bonnet but truth be told I had no idea what I was looking for. There didn't seem to be anything obviously out of place and even if there was, what would I have been able to do about it? I slammed the bonnet down in anger and took a moment to take in my surroundings. The road surface sloped down into a steep ditch on either side which then climbed into a hedgerow. Behind the hedges and bushes there seemed to be fields but I couldn't tell how big they were - it was simply too dark.

I suddenly realised the precarious position I was in. If there was another vehicle to come by, there would be nowhere for them to turn to avoid hitting me. I hunched inside and pushed the hazard light button - thankfully they worked. The blinking orange hue could only illuminate a few metres around the car before it was swallowed up in the dark nothingness. The immediate feeling of vulnerability and isolation hit me hard. I had no idea where I was, or how I was going to get help. A gentle but bitterly cold breeze pierced my shirt and I knelt on the driver's seat and reached around into the back to get my jacket. Just as I caught a hold of the collar, I noticed something out the rear window - a person was standing only a few metres from my car, just close enough so that the orange blinkers exposed his silhouette, but any real detail was obscured. *Where had they come from?* I thought as I leaned forward to try make out some more detail. I wasn't sure if it was a man or a woman and they just stayed standing, dead still in the middle of the road. I pulled myself out from inside my car and called out but I got no response. Cautiously I approached, hugging the side of my car and keeping a close eye on the mysterious figure in front of me. The orange lights flicking on and off

every second cast unusual shadows on their body, making it look unnatural, almost twisted. I reached the boot of my car and there was now only twenty feet or so of open road separating me from the stranger. I took another few steps forward and stopped. My heart was beating in my chest and I could feel my hands and fingers start to shake as a sickening feeling squeezed my stomach tight. The figure was clothed in a long black robe, with the hood pulled down low over their face. I strained to see any detail under their hood but I had little time to take it all in when the figure took a step forward and I realised what I was looking at instantly.

What I assumed to be a trick of the light casting unusual shadows proved false. As the robed figure stepped forward, I realised that it's body was massively contorted. Its arms were dangling almost past it's knees, and it was bent forward with a massive hunch. It also appeared to have a lordotic twist back from the waist resulting in its body taking on a peculiar shape like that of a backward S. It was hard to comprehend as the proportions seemed so unnatural that my brain couldn't register what I was seeing, but what caused me to flee was what I saw after it took another few steps closer. It dragged its legs, scraping loose stones on the road as it limped forward. You may notice I've called the figure "it" because I quickly came to accept that there was no earthly way this was a Human Being. After another few steps the orange lights revealed what was under the hood. Long, wet bloody hair. For a second I thought they had hair pulled over their face but I remember I felt instantly weak once I saw that there was no face. The hood was pulled slightly to one side and I knew then that I was looking at the back of someone's head, but on the front of their body. Its shoulders and chest were rising and falling but it seemed forced - too exaggerated as if it was only feigning the ability to breath. I moved backwards, hitting the bumper of my car causing me to flinch. The sudden jerk in movement after hitting my leg seemed to startle this, *thing*, and it suddenly gained

pace - as if charging me. I stumbled backwards and turned, running as fast as I could, leaving my car behind me. I took a look over my shoulder as I was fleeing and saw the hooded creature limping after me, it's silhouette outlined from orange flashing lights in the otherwise black night.

I kept running and running along the road, struggling to see. There was moonlight periodically but heavy cloud cover blocked a lot of it. I was out of breath and slowing down when suddenly the road stopped and I found myself up to my knees in soggy marshland. I stumbled, shocked at the sudden change in environment. It was dark but I could still see the road so I had no idea how I was running on it one minute and suddenly end up in a marsh the next. I looked around but there was nothing but flooded fields as far as I could see. There was no road anymore. I panicked. *What was going on?* The marshland I ended up in seemed to be sprawling endlessly, incredibly flat with no distinct bushes, rocks, trees or landmarks of any kind. Nothing only flooded grassland. I completely lost my bearings - having no road to know which way I came from I just carried on in the direction I thought I was travelling before I got confused. There was no sign of the robed figure behind me but still I waded through the water logged field as quick as I could. Muck and grass clogged my shoes and the water was ice cold. My lower legs were beginning to get numb but I carried on, adrenaline pushing me through my fatigue. I felt like an animal being hunted.

After a while I noticed something ahead - a looming jagged darkness all along the horizon. I struggled forward, the mud and water impeding my every move but I pushed on until I saw the darkness gradually take the shape of trees. A forest. It was dark, ominous and definitely didn't look inviting but there didn't seem to be much of a choice - it was either enter, or risk stumbling into that ghoulish stranger again. Neither option was ideal but I waded my way through the water until I reached the threshold of the forest. I made my way in through the trees, dodging branches and old

rotting bark on the moss covered ground until I could proceed no more. I halted, needing to rest, and took the opportunity to scan in between trees for any sign of movement anywhere around me. I started to ponder then, trying to think about what to do. At this point in time, I was pretty confident that I had not been followed, but now I was stranded in a forest in the middle of nowhere, with no way of calling for help. I started to doubt my ability to even last the night. Just as I was beginning to think that I was overreacting about the sinister intentions of the stranger, the crackling sound of some snapping twigs jerked me from my thoughts and back to reality. I looked up to see that same abhorrent figure approaching between trees. Its spasmodic gait made it appear to be lumbering slowly but in actual fact it was moving with considerable pace, albeit with seemingly great difficulty. There was something truly horrific about it and much worse was the fact that there was no doubt now that it was pursuing me. I didn't plan on sticking around to find out its intentions.

The trees were too spread out to offer an adequate hiding place or even any sort of decent cover, so running seemed to be my only option and so I proceeded deeper into the forest. I ducked and dived between low lying branches and thankfully the fog seemed to be getting lighter the deeper I delved through the thickets. I was now more exposed but could travel faster with improved line of sight - a trade off I had no choice but to accept. Never had I ran like this before and I was starting to get a stitch and was in dire need of rest when the trees started to part. Before me lay a massive lake, glistening under moonlight. I had absolutely no idea where I was and a feeling of despair rapidly started to creep up on me. Far in the distance, across the water on the opposite bank, I could just about see faint flickering lights from what I could only assume was a building of some sort nestled in between the silhouettes of large trees. The lake seemed to be situated in a giant hollow basin in a valley, set against a backdrop of some mountains. Getting to that building was my only

chance. The forest I stood at the edge of, followed the water line all the way around. I desperately needed to reach somebody. Rustling somewhere close by in the trees behind alerted me again to the apparent omnipresence of my pursuer. The ground sloped gently down towards the water and there lay a small wooden slipway on the shoreline. Miraculously, I spied a berthed old wooden rowing boat upon the waters' edge. My only options were to follow the forest along the shore to the other side or else cross by boat. Exhausted, the thought of reaching the far side on foot almost caused me to faint. I sprinted to the boat, shoving it into the water almost without breaking stride and bungled inside.

Thankfully there were oars on the deck as in my haste I had forgotten to check. I rowed frantically trying to get as much distance between myself and the shoreline as quickly as I possibly could. I hadn't rowed a boat since I was young and my embarrassing lack of upper body strength was painfully evident as I struggled to work the oars. It took me a few minutes to coordinate properly, but soon enough I got the hang of it - raw fear spurring me on. All I needed now was just to get far enough out into the lake so I could confidently take a breather. When I was satisfied I was safe enough, I stopped rowing and stood up to quickly scan around from shore to shore - there didn't seem to be a sign of anyone. Nothing but silence.

Apart from the gentle rocking of the boat everything was perfectly still except for only the very slightest of breezes. There was no sign of my follower from the shore and I managed to relax a bit. My shoulders and arms ached and I tried to massage them. It was only through the calmness of the water that I could reflect on everything that had happened. I had been running on adrenaline all this time and this now was the first opportunity I had to try ratify my thoughts. I began to contemplate the idea of my car being deliberately sabotaged to strand me here. *But for what purpose?*

As I wiped the sweat from my brow, I went to check my phone for reception. I frantically patted my pockets in a desperate search for my phone forgetting that I never had it in the first place. I cursed and took a deep breath, leaning back to look up at the stars. As I sat there entranced by the hypnotic rocking I was roused when there was a small hollow thud against the hull, causing the boat to change direction and rock slightly. I cautiously peered over the edge looking for the cause - the last thing I needed now was to hit some rocks and sink. The water was dark and impossible to see through. Suddenly the boat jerked to the left sending me flying onto the deck. One of the oars fell into the water and I just managed to scramble to my knees to catch the second. The boat began to rock violently and I was thrown back as water poured over the sides as a result of what seemed like a sudden tidal surge although impossible in an isolated lake. I was drenched and as I wiped my eyes I noticed that the water had a red tint to it. I looked at my clothes and they were covered in what appeared to be dark blood.

I looked up only to see a set of hands appear over the edges. Hands - with long gnarled fingers, covered with a layer of thin, almost translucent saggy skin clutching the edge of the boat as if getting a grip in order to hoist some unknown creature up. I tried to scream but was cut short as a sudden flood of water came gushing over the sides causing the boat to capsize sending me tumbling into the ice cold water. I quickly surfaced, spluttering from the shock of the cold and I just had time for only a single gasp of air before a vice like grip upon my ankle dragged me down. Down, further - into the depths of an abyss.

Hope was fading along with what little moonlight I could see still left shimmering on the surface. The silhouette of my capsized boat grew smaller and smaller as I was being pulled down deeper and deeper by phantoms unseen in the murky darkness. All of my struggling was futile, I

could not escape - the hold upon my ankle was too tight. Even though I was immersed in freezing water the grip upon my leg was much colder, so cold in fact that it almost began to burn. In what I thought to be my final moments, there was no split second flashback of life events. No euphoric feeling. No sightings of a tunnel with light at the end. For me, my final thoughts were of dying at the hands of an inexplicable entity that would never be known and that I would be consumed by a sea of blood and darkness - alone, frightened and helpless. What an awful way to go. There were so many unanswered questions about my pursuer and what exactly was going on and I could feel my blood start to boil. My aggravation turned into anger, which transformed into a final heroic explosion of energy. *This was not my time to die!* Everything seemed to flicker, flashes of light, bursts of noise. A burning feeling in my chest started shooting around my body. I kicked and struggled as hard as I could and somehow broke free from the deathly grip and propelled myself frantically upwards. *This was not my time to die!* I could see my boat begin to come into view and grow larger as I approached the surface. With my air expended I tried desperately to hold back my natural instinct to gasp for breath by closing my eyes and concentrating only on powering my arms and legs to thrust myself upwards. Just as I thought I couldn't hold on anymore, I broke the surface and with a gargantuan gasp, I had made it.

Coughing and struggling to take in enough air I grabbed onto the boat, now upside down in the water and rested my head against the hull. It was stained a dark red and clumps of gore were stuck onto it but I couldn't afford to freak out now. I looked around to try get my bearings. Luckily I seemed to have drifted closer to shore. I nearly got sick with the thought of whatever attacked me still lurking below, but I needed to make it to land as I wouldn't last much longer in this water. All of my muscles were seizing up but somehow I found the strength to propel myself towards the bank.

After a few minutes, which seemed like hours, I finally felt ground beneath my feet and then dirt between my fingers and I grabbed a hold for dear life. I dragged myself onto land and collapsed. I lay there for what felt like an eternity, regaining my strength and catching my breath. I hadn't time to dwell and I was starting to shiver violently as the cold started seeping into my bones - I *had* to move. I lifted myself up and staggered towards the tree line in a desperate hunt for the building which hopefully, was not too far away.

It was still dark and everything looked the same making it difficult to identify which way I was going. My clothes were wet and permanently stained red, the putrid smell constantly made me gag and empty retch. I spotted a glow of light penetrating through leaves in the darkness ahead. As I got closer, the trees became more sparse until eventually I was out in the open and standing before a small chapel. It looked so tranquil and peaceful. There was a stone wall separating me from the church which extended beyond the main frame of the building looping around and surrounding it. The lights were on inside and shone brightly like a beacon of hope amidst the darkness trying desperately to consume it. A narrow rusted iron gate with overhanging trees that lay towards one end and looked likely to be the only way in, from this side at least. There was a small worn grassy path leading up towards the entrance which I duly followed. As I got closer, I could hear the faint sound of what seemed like organ music emanating from within the confines of the church. The nearer I got the more clearly I could hear and it became apparent to me that it was not an average hymn that was being played. It sounded dark and gothic, and terribly out of tune. The result, as you can imagine was an incredibly creepy atmosphere. As I passed through the rusty gate, its hinges moaned and protested loudly as I entered what was a very old and dilapidated graveyard. The Organ abruptly stopped. I didn't move. The silence was almost deafening but the music did not resume.

The graveyard was in a bad state of neglect with many of the headstones starting to crumble into the overgrown grass around them. There was a broken up cobblestone path leading down the centre and up towards the church. This looked to be the only planned layout in the entire yard, as every other headstone was just placed in what seemed like a random spot. With no organised rows of headstones or paths to walk around, one would almost certainly have had to step on top of multiple graves to reach a specific plot. I reluctantly followed the central path. I was never fond of graveyards but after all that I had experienced that day, I doubted it could get much worse. Passing by all the different graves, I noticed the headstones were so old that it was almost impossible to make out any inscriptions on them. The whole place must clearly have been very poorly maintained, but it being in such a remote location it didn't completely shock me that this was the case. As I approached the church entrance, there were two graves at the end of the "row" that somehow caught my attention. Both had very new looking headstones. The closest one to me was filled in, but the other looked as if it was recently dug, waiting to be filled. The first Headstone was a shiny new black granite traditional style stone with thorns and nettles scattered around it. It read:

Anastasia Leanne Lemaire

Jan 14th 1990 - October 18th 2011.

That was the date that day, or the day before, depending on what time it was and how long I had spent traipsing through the forests and swimming in blood filled lakes. I remember thinking it unusual that a plot would be dug practically on the same day as a death. The next headstone, made

of Grey stone, caused every hair on my body to stand upright and gave me the most awful, sickening feeling in the pit of my stomach. It read:

Philip Patrick Clarke

April 27th 1973 - October 18th 2011

My exact name and birthday. It chilled me to the bone and sent all sorts of thoughts flying through my head. I tried dismissing it as a freak coincidence but began to feel nauseous. I badly needed to just get inside. It felt like my entire reality was about to break. *Was I losing my mind?* A voice seemed to call me as I staggered towards the old church doors. There was an intense shooting pain in my chest. My vision was blurry with flickering lights half blinding me, meaning I could only manage to reach the steps of the church door before vomiting. Fresh blood and froth stared up at me from my shirt and legs. I was still queasy but felt better for having cleared my stomach. I remember hoping the blood was only some of what I swallowed from the lake. I wiped my mouth and got to my feet just as the organ piped up again.

I pulled open the large wooden doors expecting, rather naively, to see a full congregation present but instead was greeted with rows of empty pews. Puzzled, I entered. The large doors slammed shut behind me but the music did not stop. It was not so much music but rather a constant monotonous drone, as if someone was resting on a group of organ keys continuously. The church felt warm and safe despite the unnerving music resounding from within. It appeared to be traditionally laid out with a nave down the centre, an aisle on either side, and a north and south transept before the chancel. Old scratched wooden pews were positioned in rows on either side of

the nave and were themselves decorated by a nice thick layer of dust. Large paintings placed in-between stained glass windows depicting various scenes from the bible. A fantastic giant wood carving sat behind the Priest's pulpit. Wooden Buttresses spanned the ceiling above and appeared to be half rotting with large cobwebs spun between each support. The entire church was lit by hundreds of candles both hanging, and on the floor which gave out a surprisingly large amount of light and heat. I called out but my voice was drowned out by the organ. Thoroughly exhausted by now, I stumbled down the nave to explore where the music was originating from, it had to be from one of the transepts. As I approached the crossing, my peripheral vision picked up on movement on my right hand side. I turned to face the organist. What sat before me defied all logic and understanding. Indeed, it was a sight so horrific be thankful that you did not see it with your own eyes. It is hard to describe adequately in words yet I shall try my best to do justice to the grotesqueness which lay before me.

The organ was placed against the back wall facing me, with the large pipes stretching most of the way up to the ceiling. It seemed far too elaborate and big for a chapel of this size and the sound coming from it was almost deafening. Sitting on a small stool playing it, was a robed figure almost exactly like my pursuer. This, frightening as it may be, was not what paralysed me with sheer terror. It was the fact that while it played with it's back to me, it's head hung down it's back, split from its shoulders and attached only by the thinnest strand of muscle and stringy flesh and faced directly at me. The upside-down face was contorted and disfigured making it impossible to tell a gender but two dead soulless eyes glared deep into mine, and locks of long blonde hair hung down, stained dark and knotted red with blood and dirt. It stopped playing and slowly stood up. Reaching behind, it

clasped its head with both hands and brought it up onto its shoulders, turning the head to face frontwards before pulling a hood over itself. It then spun around to face me.

I tried to flee but I stayed rooted to the spot, for some reason I felt like I was inexorably drawn towards this malevolent fiend. I was certain that it was indeed the same creature which has tormented me and it limped menacingly closer. With every step, I could feel my stomach knot more and the blood drain from my face as I collapsed to my knees - almost unable to look at the horror that approached, my eyes teared up. I could now view it in full light and it was truly disgusting. From the outline of the robes the creature's limbs appeared totally twisted and there were large spikes protruding from various points of its body. A gigantic hump weighed down on its frame causing it to stoop over but the unnatural bend at its waist almost righted it back to a normal posture. It dragged its left leg, struggling to maintain its balance and as it put its weight down to walk, thick dark blood oozed from various orifices leaving a trail of sludge in its wake. When it finally reached me, I could not breathe with pure fright. It stood motionless for what seemed like an eternity before a series of sickening cracks began to emanate from beneath its clothes. Before my very eyes the beast started to spasm, dropping to its knees and writhing on the floor as if it was possessed by some unseen entity. What I thought at first to be some sort of fit now became apparent that it was somehow transforming itself.

From what I could see from the robe, its limbs seemed to be breaking and reattaching into place, blood and gore spewed out from underneath its garment as the large spikes protruded out and then snapped off. The blood was lumpy, coagulated and a stink of rot and decay belched from its torso. A horrible gurgling noise came from beneath the hood as more blood was ejected. Slowly, I could see it take a more human shape - its proportions were becoming normalised and the blood

which was spattered all over the church started to magically run back towards the creature and be absorbed into its body. After some more minor twitching it lay completely still.

I was kneeling no more than a couple of feet away, tears running down my cheek and staring in disbelief at what I had just witnessed when suddenly, it levitated up off the ground, spinning around, righting itself and landing on its feet. It extended its arm towards my head and a horrible ghoulish hand protruded from beneath the sleeve and reached for me. I felt an invisible force act up my body, dragging me towards the bony finger which pointed at my face. I could do nothing to stop it only try recoil as its sharp fingernail touched my forehead. The nail touched my skin and everything froze. I remained glued to the spot, my eyes closed, refusing to look at the creature that was now touching my forehead. Nothing happened. Just as I went to open my eyes, it quickly slashed its nail down my face causing blood to gush from a diagonal slice running from my forehead to cheek, just missing my right eye. The creature pulled its hand back, opened its palm and struck me square in the chest sending me flying backwards. The pain was indescribable. Coughing, I spat blood and a familiar series of cracks began to sound but this time, from my body. I could feel bones in my legs, chest, back and hips crack and be pulled apart piercing my skin with some even exploding through muscle causing violent spurts of blood to spray around. I tried to scream but could only manage to gargle with the volume of blood in my throat. The pain became more excruciating as I could feel the bones in the right side of my cheek and eye socket fracture and bulge under the skin. My breathing became laboured and I started to convulse. I managed to look over at the creature who stood motionless watching with its hood now pulled down. Those dead eyes fixed directly upon me, piercing my soul. Blood still trickled down its long shaggy hair onto its cold dead looking face. My pain suddenly plateaued and I lay on my back staring at the ceiling, deformed and

mutilated, and still struggling to breath. That was when I felt that feeling in my chest again, only this time it slowly started to build in intensity as lights flickered inside my head coupled with a cacophony of sound. *This is what dying feels like.* I never thought I would welcome death before but I didn't want to experience anymore agony. There was a sudden explosion of light from within me and a deafening noise - the church seemed to warp and melt, as did my tormentor, before everything faded away.

For so long there was only darkness. A darkness so black it was almost like a physical force. After an unknown amount of time, there was an ever so faint humming sound from somewhere that was hard to pinpoint. Gradually, it became a bit louder and sounded more like a muffled droning noise - like that of someone leaning upon an organ. As the volume increased so did the pain. It was everywhere. Unbearable pain. Again. The same pain I felt only not so long ago and I wished with everything I had that it would leave me. Consciousness returned to me and I was aware that I was coughing some blood and noticed my head was resting against something. I realised that I seemed to be sitting upright and leaning forward with my face leaning upon an object. Light seeped through the blackness, trickling into my eyes. It hurt but at least I could see. It took me a few minutes to adjust and to comprehend my surroundings. Like a projector slowly being brought into focus I began to regain my vision.

It was dawn and I was sitting in my car, my head against the steering wheel. I now recognised the muffled drone as that of my cars horn. I felt like I was after been hit by a freight train. My head seemed like it weighed a ton but somehow I managed to lift it up and fell back against the headrest, the horn stopped its deafening drone. Shattered glass lay all over the car and I was covered in blood. I must have gotten sick as vomit mixed with blood and froth lay on my lap

and I had a horrible taste in my mouth. My clothes were drenched in blood and sweat. My hips and legs appeared to be crushed and I was trapped by the seat belt, unable to move. An intense burning pain sat in my chest -from the airbag no doubt and my breathing was laboured. It only started to dawn on me then that I had been in a crash. Despite my injuries I was overwhelmingly relieved to be alive. I raised a hand to my face to wipe blood away from the large diagonal deep gash on my forehead which thankfully just missed my right eye. I was still very disorientated and it was only after another few minutes that I began to get my bearings properly and looked out the driver side window. Through the trees I saw the most beautiful scenic lake with a little rowing boat along the shoreline. In the distance, far on the other side stood a misty forest with a little church nestled in between the trees set against a backdrop of large grey mountains. I wiped more blood from my eyes and turned my head slowly and for the first time I looked out through the windscreen directly in front of me.

Through the cracked glass, I could see my car rested in an overgrown ditch which ran alongside the main road I had careered off of. Impaled between the front of my car and the ditch, surrounded by nettles and thorns was a woman. She lay slumped across the bonnet, the outline of a large backpack thrown over her shoulders underneath her dark poncho gave the appearance of a massive hump on her back. She had been impaled with long branches and bits of bark that protruded from beneath her clothes which, covered in blood looked almost like spikes. Her twisted broken arms hung by her side and her face was smashed and bloodied. Her neck was broken but her head lay resting on the bonnet, upside-down but facing towards me, lifeless eyes looked directly at mine piercing my soul, and drops of blood continued to trickle down her long shaggy hair onto her cold dead face.