

Lassie Lake.



Bliss D,
B.Oliveira,
Immaculata High School,
04/27/15
Chris M, Nicole H, Yvonne W, Corey, Haley L.

Bzzzzzzzzzz SLAP my hand slapped against my thigh as I killed yet another mosquito, it was the beginning of spring so the insects were especially annoying. The air was filled with the humming noise of nature, you could listen to the crickets chirp and the birds flap from tree to tree, the continuous whir of the trickling creek added a relaxing murmur to the quaint campsite. Lassie Lake was an exceptionally beautiful place for a camping trip, the oval lake was enclosed by a thick evergreen blanket spotted with bright forsythia accents. My brother Anthony sat in front of me, lounging lazily on a towel letting his feet dig into the heated sand. A burning cigarette hung out between his fingers.

"I would really love it if you didn't have to smoke." I chirped. Anthony barely glanced over as he took an elongated puff just because Mia was watching. "There are worse things that could kill me, you just worry too much." He scoffed. I didn't pay attention to the attitude in his voice, he always talked like that. Lassie Lake was a place that had gone completely unnoticed, the wall of green and the complicated network of logging roads made it an endeavor to find. Jason and Amy were crouched around a burnt out fire pit bickering about the proper, easiest, and quickest way to ignite a fire before it got dark. I sat down near my siblings on a bench made out of a fallen tree, it wasn't the most comfortable place to sit but it still worked. I heard a low growl moan next to me, I reached my hand down and petted Ollie, our golden retriever. "Shhh! It's okay buddy, whatcha lookin at?" Ollie's eyes were glued to the entrance of the road campsite, a dirt opening about 50 meters away. I looked back down at the dog who still seemed agitated. A black object caught the corner of my eye before it darted back undercover. Ollie leaped up and began barking again, louder and more urgent this time. "Hey did you guy's that?!" I asked nudging Jason's arm. "See what?" He replied "It was probably just a deer Mia, that's probably why Ollie is freaking out." added Amy. I slouched back in my chair, there was no use arguing about it.



Night had quickly fallen and the sky was left littered with stars and pale moonlight. The four of us sat curdled around the glowing embers watching sparks dance up into the air before quickly flickering out again. The fire casted an eerie glow around the bushes and trees around us, it was ultimately our only source of light. About ten feet away I heard a shuffle and saw Ollie pacing the perimeter of our camp spot, he sat down behind Amy facing towards the black trees. He occasionally let out a few growls before getting up, tracing around everybody and sitting behind a new person. This time he sat behind Anthony. Hands clasped around my shoulders and jerked me forward, a scream shrieked out of my throat as my arms flailed forward and my palms smacked on the ground. I turned around and saw Jason leaning back letting out a loud cackle "Aweh come on Mia! You scare so easy" he continued laughing and everyone else joined in, I felt red rush up into my cheeks as I dusted the dirt off of my pants. "That's not fair that isn't something I can control you jerk." I blushed and sat back down; "It just means you're still a wimp" bugged Jason as he flicked the back of my head. The result of being the youngest is that you are always getting bugged.

The night carried on as per usual filled with laughter, the stale smell of beer and Anthony's cigarettes. My attention was snapped when I heard distant barking coming from the forest and all four of us paused. "That sounds like Ollie!" yelled Amy. We all stood up and began yelling for the lost golden retriever. "What do you think he's barking at?" asked Jason. "Do we just wait here? What if it's a bear and it follows him back here?" piped Amy. Anthony replied, "If it was a bear Ollie would probably already have been slapped around already, we should just wait here." The dogs aggressive barking continued gradually sounding more panicked and urgent every passing minute. "It doesn't feel good to wait here like this, what, is something is hurting him?" Jason seemed just as concerned as the rest of us. "Well I mean I can go check it out, I mean he doesn't sound very far away and I can kind of tell what direction the barking is coming from." That was a lie, I had no idea where Ollie was because it sounded like his barking was being echoed through surround sound. "Realistically he probably caught the scent of a raccoon and tried to follow it up a tree" I continued, "I'll go check it out." They tried to argue with me and offered to come along but if there was anything that was going to prove that I had a backbone it would be this, plus the amount of alcohol my brothers have had by now greatly aided my argument.



I grabbed a flashlight from my tent and tried to distinguish a plan of action. I could follow the dirt path that would take me to the logging road then I could maybe turn off onto a smaller trail, this would make it easier to find my way back later. My flashlight illuminated across the barrier of tress beside me, it was quiet except for the distant dog in distress. An occasional whirl from the wind would leave me dead in my tracks. I had to calm down, the flashlight in my and shook and was difficult to hold in my sweaty palms and I could feel my breath become uneasy. Putting yourself in fearful situations will make you less fearful right? I turned off onto the small thin trail, branches slapped against my legs as I pushed through the tangling mess. I could tell Ollie was close now he must be around a 30 meter radius around me, the closer I got the more his barking became more urgent. Ollies barking stopped, it sounded like someone pressed pause on a tape recorder. It was dead silent. I could hear my pulse through my ears and I tried my best to keep as quiet as possible. "Ollie?" I squeaked. I heard nothing in response. The shadows around me looked like ghouls and every snapped twig made me cringe. I turned my body around and took a step back, every hair stood up on the back of neck. I flashed my light in the opposite direction and suddenly Ollie's barking was triggered again. I froze, breathless. I hastily turned back around and continued down the winding path, the bushes around me became thicker and enclosed my small frame until every step I took felt like hands were pulling at my legs. Ollie was within 10 feet away from me I knew he was here. "Ollie! Come on! Let's go!" I shouted, and just like before the barking stopped again followed by a pained whimper. I heard a low throaty hum come from the bushes around me, it sounded harsh it was coming closer to me. I stepped backwards and launched my body into a sprint in the opposite direction. My flashlight flickered everywhere and it was difficult to see where I was going. My body lurched to the ground as my ankle twisted into a pothole, I let out a cry before pulling myself up again.



I can still hear the growl; it's behind me now. My legs burn and my lungs feel raw and I have completely lost my sense of direction. Where is the logging road from here? I've been running longer than it took to walk this way. I slowed down to regain my breath and figure out a plan, I still had no plan. I had to keep going in whatever direction I happened to be facing, I stopped and listened. Rustling bushes sounded about 20 feet away from me and the haunting growl started to echo again. I pushed myself forward again back into a sprint, my arms flailed as I swatted branches and leaves out of my face. My body collapsed again, this time the ground fell out beneath me and I felt my hands push me out of dusty sand. The beach! I could see the flow from the fire along the other bend of the lake, it was far away but I was desperate for help. "Help!" I screamed across the lake. "You guys, help me!" I needed to keep going, tears were streaked down my hot cheeks and my clothes stuck to my skin drenched in sweat. My foot dipped into the lake and sunk down a few more inches making it harder to pull myself together. I spun my head around to see a large shadow appear onto the shore, it was hard to see features but the tall silhouette was terrifying. It looked like a large cat mixed with a bear. It had a long face and long skinny ears sticking straight up, drool poured dripped out between its yellow teeth. I let out another scream and stumbled backwards. My legs fail to bring me back to my feet; I can't scream anymore my throat is too tight. I push myself and start shuffling backwards. The beast saunters up to me and I can feel its hot breath against mine. Its claws clasp around my kicking leg before I feel myself getting dragged into the water, cold-water floods over me as I struggle to bring myself up for air. The hands of this monster push down on my neck and I feel a sharp pain as it breaks my skin, I try to scream but water gets trapped in my throat. I continue flailing as I try to escape but this beast is far stronger than I am. I feel pain everywhere, my neck, my shoulder and along my torso. I'm bleeding out. My burning lungs try to cough but the grip is still holding me strongly under water. I'm starting to feel dizzy and my legs start to tingle, my muscles feel weak and the cold water makes my joints shriek in pain. I can feel myself start to fade away and my body is beginning to go limp, unable to fight back any longer.

I hear a sharp sound and a loud shriek followed by a few more loud bangs. The beast fumbles and loosens its grip around my neck, another loud pang before the beast collapses. I hear the distant sounds of yelling and I try to push up but the beast's weight has collapsed on top of me and I am still unable to move. I feel myself lose consciousness and soon I feel nothing.