

## AMONGST THE ORCHARDS

By Emm Myers

“To the road Miranda; if you can just make it to the road you’ll be alright.”  
Miranda said to herself.

She could feel the cold sting of the cold air as it blew against the open wound on her leg. With every step she took pain shot through her entire leg, she had somehow managed to slow the bleeding by fashioning her shirt into a tourniquet, but not completely stop it. She worried she wasn’t going to be able to make it to the road. Not only was she dealing with her leg, but also she was barefoot and her whole body was quickly beginning to freeze.

For an instant she thought of giving up but she remembered less than an hour ago she was trapped in a basement- a prisoner of several vile men, men who were no doubt actively searching for her, men who if given the chance would most surly end her life.

That thought alone should have been more than enough to motivate her but it wasn’t. The main reason she kept on was because of something one of the men said during his turn inside of her. He forced her to look him in his eyes while he violated her, as though the physical pain he was administering wasn’t enough to satisfy him, he wanted to crush her soul as well. He said a lot of things she couldn’t really remember but when he was done with her she found the strength to mutter the word “why”. He looked down at her in disgust and said, “cause you ain’t shit. Chicks like you think you matter but you don’t n’ ain’t shit you or anybody else can do about it- so lie there and get used to this cause you belong to us now.”

It was his words that motivated her to escape that basement, she made a choice that night to get free or give her life trying. She carefully devised a plan, as she knew she would only have one chance. During the day when most of the men were away at work, she was always made to shower. The man that watched her was farther along in age than all the other men, she assumed he was retired because he never seemed to leave the house. He was a man of routine, he would untie her, walk her upstairs to the bathroom let her in than wait for her to open the door when she was done. He never

physically harmed or assaulted her. He never even so much as tried to catch a glimpse of her naked. For some reason this angered her so much, she wondered why he wouldn't set her free, why he wouldn't stop the men that were keeping her captive. It dawned on her that maybe he also was a prisoner in his own way.

It had been over two weeks since she went missing, she wondered if anybody noticed if she was gone. She had no family, was single, she kept to herself and it wasn't uncommon for her and her best friend to go more than a few weeks without speaking. She decided that it was time; she was going to get out of that house.

She followed along to the bathroom for her shower as if it was any other day but this time instead of getting in she waited awhile and then opened the door. She looked down the hall and the man was nowhere to be found, she took a deep breath and walked to the right, she found an immediate staircase and just as she was about to turn around she was met by the astonishment on the face of the man. He lunged toward her and she ran up the stairs, all at once she found herself trapped in a bedroom without a second thought she jumped out of the open window and into a tree, surprising she only had scrapes and a few cuts- it was when she dropped out of the tree that her leg snapped and bone shown through her battered and bruised flesh. The man called out from the house and immediately her thoughts were refocused and the pain was no matter- she began to run. Now the orchard was the only thing in her way of freedom and more importantly to her justice.

As she ascended the hill she noticed the sun gleaming off a truck, the lights of a state trooper to be exact; she knew she could get a ride to the hospital- to safety. As she ran to it the officer started her way, the door opened and she began pleading for help her body in that moment was so weary she almost fainted but the officer caught her. She looked up to say thank you and to her horror realized the officers' eyes were eerily familiar.