

Out there

Natália Paľová

I open my eyes. Everything is dark and cold. I hear weird sounds around me. Where am I? My head is in great pain. In fact, it's burning. I try to stand up, not knowing where I am, not remembering how long I've been here. I fall to the ground. Who am I? How did I get here? What am I going to do?

I appear to be leaning against a tree. Again, I try to stand up but collapse to the ground in great pain. My ankle is swollen and warm. It looks like it's twisted, but I don't remember twisting it. I try digging in my memory for some information but nothing pops up. It's as if someone wiped my memory...

I stop wondering and start looking around. It is pitch dark but my eyes have managed to adjust a little. There's a small pond in front of me. I can see the reflection of the trees in it. I have failed to stand up twice already, so I just crawl and place my swollen ankle into the pond. The water is cold which helps my ankle to calm down. I start thinking rationally and take out my phone. I want to call somebody, anybody but there's no signal. In frustration I throw my phone into the pond, regretting my actions immediately after doing so. I'm offline... and alone.

My first thought is that I might die if I don't do anything to save myself. I desperately start looking for something firm to fixate my ankle.

After a while of looking I find something hard and made out of plastic. After a short examination my estimation is, that I'm holding an old selfie stick in my hand. I tear my shirt apart and use the scraps to tie the selfie stick to my ankle.

It is time to try and stand up again. I grab the nearest tree and pull myself up. To my great surprise I don't fall down, but stay on my feet. The cold water and the selfie stick helped.

I stumble forward grabbing onto trees around me, trying not to end up on the ground again. I can feel the time passing, but there is no way to distinguish what time it is, in this thick forest. All I know is that every step is more painful than the one before and that my hunger and thirst are getting worse by every minute. Am I going deeper into the forest?

After what might've been a day, or even a week I find a small house. I try calling for help but there is nobody inside. The house is in really bad condition, broken windows, no doors. I can smell the mold when I step inside. I can see where the

kitchen used to be, I can see a chair in the corner of the “room”. I try sitting on it, but it breaks the second my body touches the old wood.

I stand up and start looking for some food. There is nothing in this old house except for an old bow and an arrow. At this point it is the only chance I have. It looks like I'll have to hunt for my food.

I hop out of the house and look around. Is it safe to continue? The answer is no, but I have no other alternative. I hear something move. I turn around as slowly as I can. The sight that offers itself forces me to back off back into the house.

Don't panic, don't panic I say to myself while holding the bow and arrow ready to shoot, my back to the wall and my face to the empty space where the door used to be. I can hear the wolf trying to sniff me out. Even better, now I can see the wolf. He is getting closer by every second. I cover my mouth with one hand in an attempt not to scream. Now he can see me. I regret covering my mouth, because I wasn't holding the bow and arrow for the moment. I quickly grab my weapon, ready to attack. Two more steps and I can shoot the wolf. One, two, ... SHOOT! I actually manage to hit the wolf, but not soon enough to prevent him from attacking me. He runs forward and tries to smash my skull into pieces with his massive jaw even though my arrow already hit him. Luckily, I manage to duck, the wolf hits the wall and falls dead onto my weak body.

I can feel the weight of the wolf. I try to free myself from its grip but it's really hard since a wolf can weigh up to 80kg. Finally, I succeed thanks to the hunger in my body pushing me forward. I pull the arrow out of the wolf's body and use it to cut him up. I finally have some food in who knows how long. The wolf's blood works as a drink.

I feel so much stronger. Now I can continue my journey. The nearest civilization must be close.

I use the fur of the wolf to cover myself up. I walk out of the house, feeling strangely refreshed. I've lost track of time, I just push myself forward, hoping for the best.

Night falls. At least that's what it looks like. The forest gets a little darker. Pitch black. I raise my eyes to watch my way. A small speck of light starts bouncing in front of my eyes. Could that be someone coming to save me? Am I hallucinating? I start running towards the light. It's slowly growing. The moment I realize I am not hallucinating, and that there is actually light in front of me I start sprinting even more desperately. Trying really hard to push away the need to faint from the lack of nutrition, I sprint towards the light. Maybe it's a city. It is a city. I fall onto my knees. A wave of happiness passes through me. I am saved.

I can see small specks moving around in the city. When I concentrate my vision, I see that those are people. They are moving around in complete chaos...

I rest for a moment confused, then stand up and walk over to the city. Nobody notices me. People are bumping into each other in complete distress, noticing absolutely nothing. Windows are broken, cars trashed, people in a horrible state. I can see a small girl sitting on the sidewalk. She could be about five years old. Her parents are nowhere to be seen. I walk up to her and ask her what happened. Her answer surprises me. "We are offline..."

