

just superstitious garbage to scare people away from

The list flashed in her head yet again.

- 5) If you see dead relatives, do not approach them. They will lie.
- 6) Mirrors are forbidden. They will expose the ugly truth.
- 7) If you see a man dressed in black, be still. He will come to you if he is interested.

Her eyes opened wide and she sat up, noticing that a backpack had fallen by her and a camera lay broken on the ground. In her hand, she had a cracked mirror. When did she pick it up? She had
t of spite towards that list.

Once she stood, she noticed a man dressed in all white sitting on a stump up ahead. Finally, another person. Hopefully, he could guide her out of here. If not, it would be nice to have some company. She approached him with a smile and her hand landed on his shoulder.

Her grip on the mirror tightened.

is

She shook her head vehemently and hugged herself. There goes

rotting and falling off the sides of his face, sclera of his eyes red while the iris was bright yellow. His mouth looked like a gaping hole ready to consume her, sharp teeth pointing in every direction. When she looked back up at him, she no longer saw her father standing there but instead the monster in the mirror.

He lunged at her, slashing her left arm as she jerked away with a cry. Again, she ran. The fog around her turned red as she moved through it, but her mind was racing so fast that she had forgotten all about the rules. She was so panicked that she hadn't realized the monster wasn't even following her anymore.

of ice cold water that not even light could pierce. Onyx hands took hold of her from all angles, dragging her deeper and deeper into the depths of the lake. As she kicked and fought, she saw the last part of the list in her mind.

8) He will try to trick you. Speak wisely.

9) Do not turn your back to him.

10) Politely decline any offers he makes. Wait for him to leave before returning down the path you came.

11) After rejecting his deal and leaving the woods, never return. He will not be merciful next time.

She tried to scream, but no noise came out. Her lungs were filling with water and her struggles were growing weaker and weaker. This was it. She was going to die in this forest with hardly any recollection of why she was here. Maybe she deserved it. Maybe what her father said was true and it was her fault.

A hand latched around her wrist and the others let go, dragging her farther and farther upwards. Her head broke through the surface and she was dropped on the ground with only the tip of her shoe in the now normal puddle. She coughed up water and took in greedy gulps of air, shivering as the wind blew against her wet skin.

She looked up to meet the eyes of her savior. He was incredibly tall and dressed in black from head to toe, hands tucked into the pockets of his suit jacket. His irises appeared to be black as well, mischief swirling inside of them as his wavy, charcoal bangs fell in front of one eye. What really caught her attention were those white teeth of his, displayed by his wide grin.

She clambered to her feet, legs threatening to give way from the oxygen deprivation. She

all. Paying no mind to the fact that she was soaked, she threw her arms around him. Her body, almost acting on instinct alone, threw herself away from him as soon as she touched him. She noticed she hadn't gotten his suit wet.

no

In a way. Isn't everyone blindly stumbling through this life like children learning how to

It was so subtle that it could almost slip under the radar, and yet it still lingered in the back of her

The list came to mind, the clarity of it almost making her head throb. A man dressed in black. Trickster, liar, charmer, devil. Where did those names come from?

The rule
trees and the wind before both of their voices were cut short.

fingers closed around her hand. He shook her hand briefly before letting go.

Her eyes were drawn to the ground at something shining by the puddle. It was her mirror! She saw the man staring down into it at her, but like that thing imitating her father, he looked much

As soon as his hands touched her, she remembered where she was and why she was here. Satan's Passage. A dare, a stupid dare had sent her here. She wanted to prove her friend wrong, wanted to prove that there was nothing here.

She practically ran to her car and jumped in, turning the key in the ignition. She looked back to where she had been standing, finding that the man was nowhere in sight. Had she imagined him? She couldn't shake the feeling of dread weighing down on her shoulders. If she was free, why was her mind telling her that she had made a terrible mistake?

She ignored the feeling while she sped away from that dastardly forest as fast as she could. She was going to forget this nightmare and move on with her life. Glancing up into her rearview mirror to watch the forest fade away from her sight, she saw the man sitting in the back of her car with a wolfish grin on his face.