

It was only a few drinks.

It was just like every other Friday night he'd spent in Sebago. Every single Friday, after that dead end job finally released him, if only for a few days, from its torment. Like every single Friday before it, he'd met up with Stu, Tommy, and Ian, and dreamed the same dreams of freedom over and over over a few glasses of beer.

Freedom. Freedom to see the world. To loosen the grip of society and simply live, as only brothers can live, in the vast, untamed and unnamed lands of the country. To make their own, to rest, together. As their forefathers had built themselves their heaven, so too would they. To find true happiness. And yet, the best they could do was dream at the bar, wasting the night away as laughter rung all around the pub.

Just like every other Friday, He said goodbye to Stu, Tommy, and Ian, his words slurred and steps wayward. He heard Ian say something about calling a cab. *Good on him, he's way to sauce'd to drive.* He stumbled into the parking lot, got in his trusty F150, and headed homeward.

Freedom. It was in the stars, in every light on the road and in the heavens. He knew they'd make their home one day. Leave the world behind in favor of the countryside they so loved. To be able to roam, to wander, to traverse across the beauty of the American continent. Free to laugh, free to look up at the sta-

The front of the car had folded like a tin can, and the side of the schoolbus he'd hit looked no different. There was smoke coming from the hood of the car. He tried to move, but couldn't feel his legs. The screams. His own. Those of the young men running out of the bus, still wearing their soccer kits, calling 911. All around, it was as if hell had opened up and swallowed all of them whole.

Sirens wailed in the distance, as if the Furie's had come him, to drag him down from the hell he created to one suited for the crime of arrogance. To think that one drink was safe. That another would be fine. That yet another was no big deal. That driving home like this was safe. To think that this friday, He'd still be able to get home, just like every friday before.

His consciousness faded in and out. He wasn't even sure if any of it was real anymore. The dreams began to flood back, one final time, as the agony he caused began to fade, as if the lives that had been snuffed out in a second were lightyears away. He saw it. The vast, beautiful countryside awaited him.

It was freedom.

But at what cost?