

“Oh yeah, where were you at school? Do you go to school?” Sonya asked “no i dont go to school i am homeschooled.” Delilah replied “oh, okay fun!” She replied back “I just stay in the forest all day long, it's much better, wouldn't you love to join me? It's a lot more peaceful.”

“Sounds fun! But what about school and everything else, I still have to go to school?” Sonya asked, a hint of hesitation in her voice.

Delilah waved her hand dismissively. “Yeah, that stuff is overrated. Here, we can focus on what truly matters—our friendship and creativity. Everything else can wait. You really don't need any of that outside tension,” she said, her voice soothing.

Sonya felt a rush of comfort, warmth spreading through her. “You're right. It's nice to escape it all with you. Same time tomorrow?”

“Absolutely, would you like to join me tonight too?” Delilah said, her smile bright as she looked out into the forest. “I'll always be here for you, Sonya. Just us, away from everything.” “Yeah, I will come.”
Sonya said

As Sonya headed home, she couldn't shake the feeling of being pulled deeper into Delilah's world. The promise of their secret hideaway and shared creativity felt safe, but somewhere in the back of her mind, she wondered how far from reality she was drifting. Still, the warmth of friendship kept her coming back for more. And Delilah was a lot more comforting than home or school life.

Once it became 7:00 she headed back to her spot at the tree, when she got there Delilah was already there Sonya climbed up the tree and saw what Delilah was carving, it was a small bird tangled in thorny roots, “it's beautiful, but what dose it mean, its kind of creepy.” Sonya asked “you'll see soon enough, Sonya...” Delilah said in a slightly unsettling tone. They continue talking through the night for hours. “It's almost 2:00. I should get home.” Sonya said. “You don't have to leave, please don't...stay with me forever.” Delilah calls Sonya “what are you saying Delilah?” Sonya is getting uncomfortable but laughs it off. “I'm serious, you don't have to leave...like you said your home sucks just stay here, with me... forever” Delilah calls back “what? No i, going back home!” Sonya exclaims “I won't let you leave me...” Delilah says now reaching closer to her. Sonya's eyes go wide as she sees that all the roots and branches and growing towards her and spiraling around Sonya, she breaks free of the roots. She hops from the tree in one jump and stumbles forward.

Sonya's heart raced. "Who are you, why are you acting like this?" she demanded, trying to find courage.

"It's just me Delilah, this is the real me, I'm Just a girl like you, lost and forgotten. Come join me... it's so lonely here. We can have so much fun." The girl beckoned, "No!" Sonya yelled, suddenly feeling a surge of terror. She turned to flee, but the whispers grew into a symphony, echoing her name as the ground shifted beneath her. Roots twisted and snaked around her ankles, pulling her down into the earth.

Frantically, Sonya fought against the grasping roots, screaming as the girl's laughter filled the air, mingling with the whispers of other lost souls. "Stay with us, Sonya..." They cried, their voices melting together in one haunting melody.

With a last burst of adrenaline, Sonya broke free, stumbling through the thicket, branches clawing at her clothes, her flashlight flickering more violently now. She didn't stop running until she reached the edge of her yard, crashing against the porch. As she tried to open the back door the branches twisted around her legs and pulled her back to the forest she grasped at the ground trying to pull free but she couldn't, the branches started going back into the ground, as if groaning backwards Sonya sighed thinking she was free but they did not let go of her they were bringing her under with them she saw the corners of Delilah's mouth curl up into a smirk and she grabbed for the surface, but the branches were stronger, they pulled her under and dirt and dried leaves filled her face making it hard to breathe, her vision blurred as the dirt covered her eyes, and she got buried alive nothing left of her story. As the light left her she saw countless other victims of Delilah's deception begging to be freed from the eternal struggle of gasping for air in the dry ground, not realizing they have already died years ago.

the promise of companionship that turned to malice had trapped them here,. The woods held many secrets, and some friendships came at too high a price.

