

# Run

I run, faster than I ever have, ever knew I could, away from the dystopia and totalitarian regimes of England. I don't know where to go, just away. Sprinting through the forest undergrowth, faster and faster, the enforcers nearing unnervingly quickly. I wish I had time to gaze upon the forest's beauty but I can't stop, not when I'm so close. I'm losing my breath quickly, vision blurred, my bare feet cut and full of thorns, branches from trees raking across my face, my legs burning like an inferno, but I can't care.

My situation doesn't allow me to care.

If the enforcers catch me...

What scares me is that I don't know what they'll do to me.

Jackson Andrews rose to power two years ago in 2020. *Two years* of torture and terror. To think we thought *he'd* be a good leader.

First he hired 'enforcers', to carry out beatings to any poor soul who dared break any rules.

*Who knows what they'll do to runaways*, my mind says.

Then he made us work for him. Building, farming, baking; the list continues. At age twelve I already had almost twenty job quotas to fulfil, or almost twenty beatings to suffer.

Soon the executions came. I don't like talking about them.

I hate this world. No friends, no family. I have good reason to run.

But now that I'm running, I need to carry on.

I stand on a root jutting out from the ground and feel excruciating pain erupt through my foot.

I cry out, and limp as fast as possible, but the enforcers are upon me.

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“Put your hands up kid!” the leader yells through his mask.

“Ok.”

I comply. Or execution could await.

But then, yes, I think it might be a blessing from god, because then the rain starts, and with the rain comes...

Lightning.

The first bolt strikes the tree next to me, the explosion throwing me into the mud. The enforcers don't have it as good; the chorus of their screams is savagely cut off as the blazing tree topples, barely missing me.

With the enforcers gone, I try to relax, but I still have reason to run; despite the rain, fire quickly spreads across the forest ground, chasing me like a wire to dynamite. Screaming a final cry of determination, I push on through the fire and the flames, towards freedom, towards happiness...

I'm out of the woods at last.

I take ten steps and pass out, not quite alive but not quite dead, either. It's dark, but quiet, tranquil. Calm.

Awoken by a hand on my shoulder, a teenager, stands beside me, surrounded by about fifty others, all ages. He has brown hair and eyes, kind looking. His smile shows it.

“Name?” he asks.

“J.” I respond wearily.

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“Rebels?” he turns to the people observing. “The newest recruit of the rebellion is here!”

The others cheer warmly.

I laugh, because I know I have purpose, reasons to live, reasons to be...

Happy.