

The Bush

Glancing in the mirror to her left, she studied the landscape falling away. The ensuing cars still loomed. Shifting her eyes back to the windscreen, the horizon streamed towards her, and she steadied her gaze. Were she not an astute driver, constantly checking her mirrors and surroundings, she would have missed the image of the white station wagon veering suddenly across the opposite lane of traffic, narrowly missing the oncoming vehicles.

That was a sharp turn, frowned Laurel, tearing her eyes from the rear view mirror.

Chancing another glimpse at the reflection, she witnessed the horrific events as they unfolded. Like a timepiece slowly unwinding, everything transpired in seemingly slow motion. The turn was not planned. Without the guidance of a road, the car roared up over the guard rail, catapulting through a traffic sign. Unhindered by the flat metal mounted on solid steel, it continued its flight until gravity's imprisonment dragged it back to the earth. Missing an aged and sturdy gum tree by only centimetres, the car nestled into an overgrown bush. Laurel could almost hear the crack of splintering wood and snapping twigs as it lurched to a rest.

Abruptly manoeuvring her car to the roadside, Laurel instinctively acted to help those in the now crumpled vehicle. She hesitated briefly, realising that, unlike an overblown crash scene from an action film, the aftermath of this disaster might be unpleasantly real. As she ran back down the road, the branches of the bush still shuddering angrily, Laurel hoped that what she found would not haunt her forever.

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David slumped in the back seat of the car, head resting on the windowsill and eyes rolling over the scenery on the opposing side of the glass. His mother tried to carry on a conversation, but his single word replies did little to uphold his end.

Having travelled this route twice a day, five times a week for the last year, the landscape failed to captivate him long ago. His eyebrows therefore perked at the rampaged guard rail approaching. Naturally following the route proceeding through the bent metal of a once proud traffic sign, his gaze finally came to rest on the heavily damaged bush.

Renewed fascination raced a thousand questions through his mind, but he ultimately settled on one, simple query, “I wonder how that happened?”

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The bush lay broken and splintered, but not defeated. Whereby previously it grew along the busy road camouflaged by more distinguished trees, it now flaunted a uniqueness of its own. Boasting its new appearance, catching the eye of even the weariest travellers whirring past, it stood no longer lost in the landscape like a sheep in the herd but as a marker of something extraordinary and life changing.

With time, it replenished its foliage more abundantly than ever – a brilliant green against the drab background of surrounding undergrowth. It stood not only as the provider of life altering events, but also forever changed in itself – awakened and renewed.