

## **NOT ALONE IN THE WOODS.**

Anne's friends were going on an adventure to the Brazilian Rain Forest, but Anne had decided not to join them, because she could not bear to leave her beloved dog, Max, alone without her love. Anne herself was not in good health.

Instead, despite the fact it was the middle of winter, Anne decided to spend her days exploring the English countryside and, although it could not be compared to a trip to exotic Brazil, it gave Anne some comfort to know that she was not taking for granted the natural beauty of England. Of course, Anne would take her beloved companion, Max, with her.

So, that Saturday morning, Anne put Max in the back of the car, and they drove off to Epping Forest. Arriving, Anne and Max set off to lose themselves in the ancient Essex woodland, where many of the trees had been living since the days of the Anglo Saxons.

Running her hand down the bark of one tree, Anne, reflecting on her own increasing age, comforted herself, saying, 'You have been here so long, and yet you are still as beautiful as ever. I shall follow your example'. This moment transported Anne away from all her anxieties and concerns, and took her into the world of nature and contentment. Max, his big eyes looking beseechingly at his mistress, seemed to understand the emotional comfort Anne was finding, and this gave him his own contentment.

At that moment, the rains came down and the winds hollowed, and Anne, standing in a tiny gap between two trees, turned to find more shelter. Unfortunately for her, she tripped over a root of one of the trees, so that she cracked her head on its bark, making her unconscious. Max, realising that Anne was in trouble, chose to remain beside her, keeping her body warm through the warmth of his.

They were both lost in the woods, alone.

As the rains and winds beat their bodies, Anne remained still and silent as Max howled, but to no avail. Anne's physical body was soaked in the cold rain of an English winter, but her unconscious mind was taking her on a journey through those rain forests of Brazil. Anne's body was lost, but her mind had found a new place to live and breathe.

Max understood that his human companion was in danger, so he did not move. No danger to him was more important than the danger to his mistress.

When they were both discovered, bedraggled but alive, the next day, the doctor reflected that there would have been serious concerns for Anne's health, had not Max protected her throughout the night. Anne's love for her companion had meant that she had not, in person, discovered the warmth of the Brazilian rain forest, but, instead, had visited those rain forests in her mind. Anne had been saved by the physical and emotional warmth of her most beloved companion in all the world, her dear friend Max.