

FOREST OF MEMORY

by *Mary Robinette Kowal*

THE DAY KATYA WENT OFFLINE, she had only planned to buy a typewriter, a paperback book, and a stapler.

But when she rode her bicycle, with the typewriter, the paperback book, and the stapler, into the woods she saw a deer on the road. The deer saw her and stopped.

Katya thought it would be a very nice idea to take a picture of the deer, so she did. She asked her imaginary friend Lizzie to hold the picture for her, and Lizzie said she would.



BANG!
POW!

While she watched the deer there was a bang and a pow and the deer fell down. Katya was not alone. She was not alone at all. There was a man on the road, with a gun. She told Lizzie to call for help.

But Lizzie didn't answer.

All Katya had to fight the man with were the typewriter, the paperback book, and the stapler. And her bicycle. She tried to ride away, but her bicycle was too slow with the typewriter, the paperback book, and the stapler.



She left them all behind and ran into the woods, but the man found her anyway.

He shot her, the same way he shot the deer with a bang and a pow.

But Katya wasn't dead and neither, it turned out, was the deer. The man had just put them both to sleep for a little while. He kept Katya close by his side while he hunted other deer. She wanted to run away, but didn't know where she was. She didn't even have the stapler.

She stayed with the man for three days. She thought he might keep her forever, but one of the deer gored the man with its horns. He was hurt very badly, and told her that she would need to call for help.

Finally, she could reach Lizzie who had been very worried about her. The police had found her bicycle, with the typewriter, the paperback book, and the stapler, but they couldn't find Katya. She told them where she was and tried to lead them back to the man, but he was gone.

And the deer were gone.

And no one believed her.

