



The Summer Of 1983

It's the summer of 1983 in Byron Bay a great time for Leanne, Bethany, James and Conner. The four teens, bound by a friendship that was as unbreakable as the tides, spent nearly every evening at the beach. In summer Australia, the days would be hot, and the nights would be warm, and this encouraged them to release their youth and freedom with their recklessness. The beach was their second home, a way of escaping their parents and the small town of Byron Bay.

As the sun would sink below the horizon, painting the sky with warm colours of pinks, and oranges the teenagers would often gather round homemade bonfires, drinking alcoholic beverages like ciders, beers, and spirits. They'd share stories of themselves, others, and stories of memories they'd made over the years. They would discuss their goals, their dreams and their fears. Their friendship they had was unbreakable.

As the alcohol spread to their bloodstream, their laughs would become louder, they'd talk faster, and their voices echoed and slurred, the alcohol made them feel invincible in the warm stary night of Australia. James, the daredevil, would often run into the cold water at night, embracing the warm air against his pale skin, encouraging the others to join in, stripping down to their underwear one by one running into the cold fresh water, the waves crashing against their bodies.

But the ocean at night was different to the ocean during the day, no hot sun guiding them through the water, no lifeguards looking out for them to keep them safe.

One night the teenagers were on the beach, they were more intoxicated than they normally were, the alcohol making them more sluggish, the waves feeling heavy against them as the play in the ocean. On this particular night the wind was stronger than it normally was, and the breeze was chillier then normal, but due to their intoxication they had no care for their safety.

Leanne was the first to go down, the strong waves pulling her through the water, due to her intoxication, her ability to swim decreasing, each wave pulling her further and further out to sea, Leanne screams for help but at this point she's too far out from the group, another wave comes but this time she can't keep her head up.

Next was James, although James was a surfer and had been surfing since he was 9, he wasn't able to beat the waves James trying to fight to stay afloat, starts to struggle, also screaming out for help but it was too late, the alcohol had taken a toll on him causing

the waves to consume him. His last thought being of regret for drinking so much. Bethany and Conner had managed to make it back to shore, but shortly realising that their friends didn't follow. By that time, they realised it was too late the ocean had taken them, leaving nothing but the sound of the waves crashing against the shore.

The next morning the beach was eerily quiet, the bonfire burnt out, empty bottles scatted around the bonfire on the sand, a grim reminder of the events that had happened the night before. The sun rises but this time it doesn't feel as warm as usual, the sun leaving shadows on the beach, highlighting the emptiness of where their friends should have been.

The tragedy left a sense of loneliness in the little town the word spreading like wildfire about the two deaths of the two teenagers at Byron Bay. For the other two the beach that had once felt like home, felt like a graveyard, a place of loss and sorrow. Conner and Bethany were never the same after the death of their two best friends haunted by the memory of their deaths. The summer of 1983 ended with the funeral of the two teens, everyone in the town coming to pay their respects to the parents of the two teens.

In the years following, Conner and Bethany would casually visit Byron Bay beach but would never set foot in the sea at night again, the memory of that night, the sound of the big waves crashing against the shore and the smell of the salty water forever taunting them, a reminder of what once was a group of four, but now a duo.