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Hello, hope you like the non-fiction
Backcountry Blunders

One fine day over February break my twin sister and I woke up around eleven and decided to head over to Killington. For once my mother agreed to trust us with her Honda Accord. This took a little persuasion due to our previous driving records; of course we were well-reformed college kids now. Of course.

Upon arriving at Bear Mountain, we strapped on our boots, skis, and All East passes. We raced down the steepest trails on Bear and decided to work our way over to the canyon, in order to check out the fresh powder in the woods. From the Gondola we sped down Double Dipper, cutting tight turns and smashing moguls to slow us down. Hopping on the glades chairlift, we discussed taking West Glade down to Racers Edge, where we had dropped into the woods on the previous day. We ski-skated over to West Glade and to the sign stating "wild thing" all natural snow, and no grooming. Right before I launched down the hill, Saskia called me to the edge of the trail where many ski tracks headed into the woods beneath an orange rope and another sign warning us to keep in bounds. "Let's bang it" I said. Brazenly we ducked the rope, followed tracks then traversed out to get untouched snow. "Hey! Check it out a lean-to!" Saskia hollered as she ducked beneath pine boughs and shot into a thin chute. I followed and we discovered two men in the cabin puffing down. We took off into the woods pulling jump turns around trees. The powder was a little heavy and quite deep. With a shallow incline, moving was slow and we had seen no tracks for a while. I trailed Saskia for a time and she kept pushing left for a fall line. "I think we should veer right," my instincts kept saying. So we continued down, and down, traversing a little. Suddenly, I heard Saskia yelp. I turned around just as she bit the ground with her leg wrapped around a sapling. "Are you ok?" I called. She was groaning about her knee. "Shit," I thought. "I'm fine," she said meekly. She laid there for a moment, then got up. I noticed she was being careful not to weight her left leg. "Let's get out of the woods," she declared. "That's cool," I agreed. She followed me as I traversed hard right across the mountain. After five minutes or so she said, "Let's head down and hit a trail!" So we veered down the fall line and skied through the trees and deep powder for a long time. "Hey I can see a trail!" I cried. Anxiously, we skied faster towards it. There was no trail; it was an illusion, a mirage created by the foggy day and mountain. "What time is it!" I answered, "2:40, we've got to boogie if we want to make it back to Bear mountain." After pushing down another five minutes I could see lots of trails in front of us. We stopped. "HOLY SHIT, HOLY SHIT!" I screamed. In front of us loomed another mountain; below us was a ravine. "We screwed up," Saskia said. A choking panic rose up from my gut. We immediately started traversing up and right hard. We past a trail going down that looked like an untouched snowmobile trail. That was the Appalachian Trail, which goes over Killington peak, we were on the backside.

Ten minutes later we saw what we were facing. The mountain convoluted around and a huge head wall was in front of us. "We're going to have to climb it," I said. "Are you nuts! We can't climb that!" Saskia protested. We stood there and discussed our options. We decided to Go back to the AT and follow it out. We skied down and to the left praying we would find it. Just as Saskia started to yell that we'd never run into it, I saw a bridge and the trail. As I crossed the 3-log bridge my right ski slipped between two of them. I started to cuss as I worked myself out of this new predicament. We skied a ways on the trail until it started uphill. With skis on our shoulders, we slogged through powder up to our thighs. It was going pretty well, but we were getting very tired. Breaking trail was the hardest part, but we kept trading off. I hiked up a steep slope, each time I picked up my ski

boot it was an effort. I finally stopped and fell to my knees and nuzzled my hot face into the snow. How easy it would have been to stop and fallen asleep right there. "Don't do that Natasha!" Saskia reprimanded. I opened up my coat and pulled out my water bottle and chugged for a second, then handed it to my twin. I burped a few times, and each one felt like I needed to puke. I looked at my watch 3:40. Saskia took the lead and we stopped again. My skis were heavy, my feet and legs were heavy, and my breathing was heavy. We stood and prayed to God to get us out of the woods, for energy, and intuition. After trudging further we both stopped and sat in the snow. "I want to get out of here before dark," already I had had thought of spending the night in the woods. I felt delirious. "Listen can you hear the road Natasha?" "I think so, It might be the sky though." "We'll never make it out by hiking! Look at us! Let's put on our skis and head for the road! Let's ski this out!" "I'll follow you," I consented. Putting on my skis took so long. Five inches of packed snow on the bottom of my boot and in my binding prevented an easy snap in. I banged my ski pole on the bottom of my boot, chipping off snow. I placed my boot in and leaned way back as Saskia pushed my binding closed with her pole. My boot was barely held in. Skiing took much less energy, which raised my spirits as we moved swiftly through the snow. We stopped every few minutes to listen for the road. We found our road; it was a roaring brook. "Let's follow the brook," I said. We would ski a ways on one side, until it got so thick we were forced to cross to the other side then back again.

The mountains on either side of us were slowly flattening out. Our skis scraped so many rocks and trees, I knew a tune up would be inevitable. My new jacket and North Face pants were dirty and soaked with sweat. Branches from saplings whipped into my face scratching fiercely. I put my arms out and let the branches slap by me. I would close my eyes then peak to make sure I wasn't headed for a tree. I took the lead for a while following the brook. I looked up to the right and low and behold, a road. We side stepped up the bank and sure enough, it was a wide trail with blue blazes, an extension of the Appalachian Trail. It was nice not to fight the brush and trees and just follow a nice path.

I glanced at my watch again with dread. 4:30. I hoped daylight would persist. We pushed along with out much slope, having to cross country ski, pushing with our arms and poles. The trail got skinny then wide again. We went around a bend and then I yelled, "A road Saskia! A road!" We hopped onto the back road covered with snow, there were tire tracks, and a house a cross the way. It looked dead. We skated down the road and passed the empty house. Our spirits rose a little, at least we were out of the woods. Farther down I saw a white picket fence and a dark house up the driveway. I skied past it and saw a light on inside. We scrambled up the there but alas; it was just as desolate as the last place. On we trucked, frustrated with the fading light and this dinky road no one lived on. The light continued to drop and we were forced to take off our skis and walk up many hills. Finally a little slope allowed descent on the boards. We crossed a bridge and I looked up to see golden lights of salvation stare at me as the inky sky bled into night. We took off our skis and ran up to the house. In the window was a woman in her later thirties sewing. She opened the door, listened to our story, gave us water and a twenty mile ride squashed in a small pick-up back to the Honda at Bear mountain. It was seven o'clock when we got to our car.

This event occurred two seasons ago. I can look back and laugh at ourselves, after all we were the champions in the end, we got out. Yet I haven't forgotten the fear and knowing I was lost in the green mountains among acres of unhumanated wilderness. It was only our persistent, naïve belief that we were getting out of those woods that led us to safe-ground.