

YETI MAN

Snow sprinkles down from the black trees. It is a sparkling white against the dark forest. The bare branches reach out for each other. Yeti man needs enough wood before the storm comes. Yeti man is always searching for wood. Always searching.

Yeti man is exploring a nearby area of the woods, because there are not enough branches around the cabin. As yeti man reaches down for a nice, large branch, the sounds of footsteps are heard crunching through the snow. No animal threatens the mass of yeti man, but often they try. Yeti man crouches, and looks over the foliage.

It is a woman.

Yeti man has not seen a woman in the woods before. She moves with uncertainty, and seems to be searching. Maybe she is searching for yeti man. Yeti man laughs at that thought, there is no one left to look for yeti man.

Yeti man sets down his findings, and watches the woman. She hears the movement, and looks in yeti man's direction. Yeti man sees her face, her eyes, and remembers. She is no stranger, and she is not welcome here.

Yeti man hurries back to the cabin. The woman has come back to ruin yeti man's peace. This is yeti man's place of solitude. Place of content. She will trick the yeti man again.

Yeti man arrives at the cabin. The large, pale hand of yeti man makes the doorknob look insignificant. Yeti man walks in, and tends to the embers of the fireplace. It has gotten cold inside, although yeti man has only been gone for an hour. Yeti man checks the pot hanging above the fire. Dinner will be ready soon.

Yeti man sits on the bed. The trickster woman should have never come back. She had disappeared, and ruined yeti man's life. Yeti man had to find someone else. Yeti man had found Margaret.

Margaret was the savior, but she never knew about the trickster woman. It was for the better. If Margaret knew, she would have left yeti man. But she did leave yeti man. Margaret faded away, and now yeti man is alone.

"Margie?" said yeti man.

Yeti man received no answer, and never did. Yeti man's feeble voice fell in the silence.

"I never told you about--" yeti man couldn't bring himself to say it. Yeti man grunted as if that would explain everything.

"She was an evil woman, and I fell for her. We were together a long time, but I barely knew anything about her. I remember one spring, we went to the drive-in to see some alien movie. It had talking apes. It was her favorite movie. I always thought it was odd.

"A long time later she grew quiet. I asked her what was wrong, and she told me she was having a baby. I'd never been happier. I asked her to marry me. She said yes, and then went to lie down. I never saw her again. She disappeared, and broke my heart." Yeti man said this with much difficulty and sorrow.

"After a while I realized she tricked me into falling in love with her. Only an evil person could break someone's heart like that." Yeti man stayed quiet for a moment.

"I'm glad I met you Margie. You helped mend my heart. I'm sorry I never told you. I'm sorry that I let this trickster woman cloud my love for you. Can you forgive me?" Yeti man looked down at the floor. The silence was only broken by the crackling of the fire.

Yeti man thought about the trickster woman. She must be here to ruin yeti man's solitude. She has already disrupted yeti man's thoughts.

Yeti man gets up, and grunts over to the washbowl to clean up for dinner.

"Margie, I made your favorite. Meat and potato soup." Yeti man sighs, and dries off.

Yeti man walks to the pot, and there is a knock on the door.

She has found yeti man.

Yeti man stared at the door. The trickster woman has come back, after all these years. Why would she do this to yeti man? Long ago yeti man gave up the search for her. Yeti man had thought she was dead.

There is another persistent knock on the door.

"I know you're in there. I can see the smoke coming from the chimney. Please let me in. It's cold outside. I mean you no harm," she said.

Yeti man got up, and silently opened the door. There was no point in hiding. Yeti man looked at the middle aged woman. She had the same green eyes as the trickster woman, but it was not her.

"You are John Walden? My name is Nova. I'm your daughter."

Yeti man nodded, and gestured for her to come in.

"This is the nicest cabin I've ever been in," she said, followed by a petty laugh.

"Actually, it's the only one I've ever been in. You've lived here for five years, right?"

Yeti man was surprised that she knew that. How long had she been looking for yeti man?

She spoke again, "I bet you're freaked out that I'm here. I guess I can just tell you everything. I've been looking for you ever since my mother died eight years ago. She had been

the only person in my life, so I thought it was time to find my father. I found you a couple years after my mother died, but I saw you with your wife and thought it better that I stayed away. When I found out your wife passed away, I tried finding you again, but you had disappeared. It was almost like you didn't exist. I never thought my dad would be a giant, hairy mountain man. No offence."

Yeti man finally replied, "You must be 40 years old."

"I'm 42, actually."

Yeti man looked around the cabin in disbelief. Yeti man never expected to meet the child. Yeti man didn't even know if it was a boy or girl; only that it was gone just like the trickster woman. This was yeti man's chance to understand what happened.

Yeti man looked at Nova, and remembered what it felt like to have company. He said, "Please, sit down." Yeti man walked over to the pot hanging over the fire, "Would you like some soup?"

"Yes, I'm famished. I walked through the woods for over an hour before I found this place."

"Which way did you come from?"

"The small town twenty miles from here. A nice, old man gave me a ride this direction, but we weren't really sure where to go. He dropped me off a couple miles from here."

"Didn't he think that would be dangerous since there is a storm comin'? What if you lost your way?"

"I was sure I would find you. I did my research. The man offered to walk with me over here, but I told him not to worry about it. He had already done so much for me."

“You took quite a risk gettin’ over here. I guess you’ll just have to stay until the storm goes by.” As if on cue, the wind picked up and a branch thudded against the side of the cabin.

“How long do you think that will be?” she said.

“A few weeks. I’ll radio the sheriff’s office when it safe for you to travel back.” Yeti man wasn’t sure if this was a good idea, be there was no choice. She could die out there.

Nova thanked yeti man, and soon the two were talking about the trickster woman. She was a very secretive woman, and never explained why Nova’s father wasn’t around. Over time Nova learned that her mother had left him, as if for no reason. When Nova was old enough to take care of herself, trickster woman would leave her alone for weeks at a time, sometimes forgetting to keep food in the house. It seemed like the trickster woman had a secret life, but Nova knows almost nothing. She just knew that her mother instilled a fear in her to never talk or connect with other people. Nova spent most of her life alone.

Throughout the conversation yeti man would only nod his head and grunt in response. Occasionally yeti man would mention the time spent with trickster woman, but not in detail.

It was getting late, and Nova looked extremely tired.

“Maybe it’s time we rest,” said yeti man, “You can sleep in the bed.”

“But where will you sleep?”

“I have an extra cot.” Yeti man pulled out a small, lumpy mattress from under the bed. Yeti man looked at Nova, and for a moment thought about kissing her forehead, but instead nodded and grumbled goodnight. Yeti man turned down the lantern, and took the cot to the other side of the cabin. Yeti man set up the cot near the fireplace, the embers were a dark orange.

Nova got comfortable on the bed, and soon silence filled the room. The rough winds outside made the cabin creak. Yeti man struggled to sleep that night.

* * *

Yeti man woke up early the next morning. Nova was still asleep on the bed. She looked cold, so yeti man livened the fire and gave her an extra blanket.

Yeti man took a moment to look at her face. She has dark brown hair, with small touches of grey. Her lips are small, like the trickster woman. She has the same long nose yeti man has. Yeti man remembers her green eyes. They're like the forest trees in spring.

Yeti man peeks through the window and can only see snow. Yeti man opens the front door, and finds three feet of snow blocking the opening. Yeti man begins making a path through the snow. Better to do this now rather than later. The snow still falls in heavy flakes from the sky.

Nova is awake by the time yeti man is finished.

"How does it look out there? You're covered in snow," she said.

"It looks badder than it is. Should stop snowin' in a day or two. It'll be a couple of weeks before we can radio town."

Nova didn't reply. She inched closer to the fire and rubbed her hands together.

Later that evening, yeti man and Nova ate a dinner that Nova prepared. She wanted to celebrate their union, and even attempted to make dessert with the little flour and supplies yeti man had. The meal was mostly quiet. Nova attempted to have conversation, but yeti man didn't join in. At the end of the meal yeti man thanked her for such a nice dinner, and went to bed.

This routine seemed to be on replay for the next three weeks. One night after dinner, yeti man told Nova that the radio lines were back up.

Yeti man said, “We oughtta radio the sheriff and see about getting you someplace warmer. The lines are workin’ now, just a bit of static.”

She replied quickly, “Let’s give it time to clear up. We don’t want any miscommunication.”

Yeti man reluctantly agreed. Yeti man was feeling unrested. Since Nova arrived, yeti man had not had a sound night of sleep. Yeti man longed for solitude.

One more week went by. Nova began getting sick. She was shivering constantly, and had a horrific cough. She would sit by the fireplace all day and some nights trying to stay warm. Yeti man tried to help her, but instead stayed out in search of wood for longer and longer periods of time. Yeti man couldn’t stay with her for long.

One night when yeti man returned home Nova looked ghostly. Her eyes were dark, and sunken. Her skin was as pale as the snow.

Yeti man rushed to her side.

“I’m radioin’ town. You need a doctor,” he said.

Nova was too weak to respond.

Yeti man put the radio on the table. Yeti man switched on the radio, but nothing happened. Yeti man thought that the battery had died.

Yeti man found the spare battery and replaced it. Yeti man switched on the radio again, and nothing happened. Yeti man grunted in confusion, and then checked the wires. A few of the wires had been chewed through, causing the radio to not work.

Yeti man was astonished. The radio had been just fine a week ago. Yeti man looked at Nova.

“I’m gonna have to go into town tomorrow to get you help. You can’t travel in your condition, so I’ll bring someone back with me.” Nova looked at him with tired eyes.

“You don’t have to do that. I think I just need time to get used to the cold, that’s all,” she said. She attempted a weak smile.

“I’ll still need to go and get this radio fixed. Won’t be no trouble findin’ a doctor while I’m in town,” he said.

“Too bad about those wires,” she said. Silence filled the room while yeti man thought about what she said.

“I’m gonna go get more wood,” yeti man said. Before Nova could reply, yeti man was out the door.

Yeti man thought about how odd she was acting. Nova must know something about those wires. She was keeping yeti man from radioing town.

Yeti man walked through the woods and sat at the base of a massive, black tree. It was yeti man’s place of thought. There is a hollowed out area in the base of the tree where yeti man sometimes talks to them.

They help yeti man. When yeti man needed food, they helped. When yeti man was hurt, they helped. They made yeti man. Maybe they could help yeti man again.

“Hello?” said yeti man.

A dark shadow rolled over the forest. It crept over yeti man, and rushed to the tree. The tree became darker, and it seemed to radiate.

“My . . . daughter has come to visit me,” said yeti man. “She’s sick. I want to help her, but she won’t let me get her to a doctor. I think she wants to stay. She don’t have anywhere else to go.”

The tree branches rustled. Yeti man heard static.

“I tried the radio, but I think she broke it,” yeti man said .

The shadow flexed outward from the tree for a brief moment.

“I don’t think she meant no harm by it. I just want her to leave, and get some help.”

Part of the shadow left the tree, and twirled around yeti man. The shadow paused, and brushed yeti man’s chest, right above the heart.

“I remember how you saved me. I can never forget that.”

The shadow retreated to the tree. Yeti man sat there, one hand over the heart.

“Can you help me?”

The branches made one up-down motion.

“I’ll bring her tonight.”

The shadow left.

* * *

Yeti man walked through the cabin door. Yeti man saw Nova sitting in a chair next to the fireplace. She had a blanket over her lap, and some of her color had returned. She smiled at yeti man. It reminded yeti man of the trickster woman. She wasn’t welcomed here.

“You look better,” yeti man said .

“I feel better,” she said. “Just a little tired. You were gone for a very long time. Did you find any firewood?”

Yeti man had forgotten to bring back wood. After talking to them, yeti man needed time to think. Yeti man decided that this had to be done; she had to leave.

“Are you going to say anything?” Nova said .

“I’m sorry, I was just thinking that I haven’t gotten the chance to show you the forest.”

“That’s alright. There was the storm, and then I got sick. I’m feeling well enough now. Maybe we can go in the morning.”

“That gives me an idea. We oughtta go right now. There’s this beautiful tree I want you to see. It’s not far.”

Nova looked startled. “It’s getting dark outside, and I need to rest.”

“It’s not far, and the fresh air will be good for you.”

She reluctantly agreed to go. Nova put on her coat and snow boots. Yeti man grabbed a lantern. Yeti man and Nova walked outside into the forest. Everything was covered in a thick layer of white. The trees were dark against the snow. It was as if the forest had burned before winter. The sky was a fiery shade of orange, with the sun just touching the tops of the trees.

Yeti man guided Nova towards the black tree. Occasionally Nova would ask questions, but yeti man’s answers were only brief. Soon the two were moving silently through the snow.

Yeti man and Nova saw the large tree through the forest. The two approached it, but Nova was hesitant. The tree stood darker and livelier than the rest of the forest. Nova balked at the tree.

“Go ahead,” said yeti man. “Get closer. There’s an opening in the back of the tree. That’s where we’re going.”

“It’s so big,” she said. Yeti man gently pushed her forward, and then walked towards the tree. Nova refused to follow.

“Nova, this way,” said yeti man.

“I’ve just never seen anything like this. This might sound crazy but, it feels alive. Like it *wants* me to get closer.”

“I understand just fine. Come over here and see for yourself.”

Nova slowly walked over to the tree. When she was close enough to touch it, she held out her hand and reached for it. Yeti man grabbed her hand, and lightly pulled her towards the other side.

“This way,” said yeti man.

Nova finally began walking towards the back with yeti man. “How did you find this place?” she said.

“This way,” said yeti man. Yeti man found the opening, and brushed away some snow. It was half of yeti man’s height, and just as wide. Yeti man handed the lantern to Nova. “Go ahead, go first.”

Nova stepped forward, hesitated, and then walked right to the opening. She squatted, and put her hand on top of the opening. Suddenly, Nova was pulled inside. She only got the chance to let out a small yelp.

The shadow drifted out of the opening, rolling the lantern along with it. The shadow stopped at yeti man’s feet. Yeti man reached down and picked up the lantern. The shadow moved up, and gestured for yeti man to leave.

“What happens next?” said yeti man.

The shadow closed in on yeti man's face, and touched yeti man's cheek. Yeti man heard the sound of fire crackling on wood. Yeti man went home. Yeti man has to stay.