

Beasts of Barlow Road

Chapter 1: Mossy Tree Lane

Sasha and Todd have lived through the worst nightmare any kid could possibly dream of. Both face a great uncertainty for their futures as they looked out the windows down at a rough remote unfamiliar landscape from their plane forty thousand feet. Todd looked up towards this sister with his green eyes in dismay as if asking what was going to happen to them now? However that question was asked so many times that he could only manage a soft wheeze.

Sasha stretched her arm around and allowed him to rest his head against the side her breast. She played with his orange locks trying to emulate what her mother would do. She held a strong optimistic attitude, but she was so emotionally drained that she used his head to cry on. Todd fell asleep before Sasha drifted into a light nap only to be jarred awake a couple times from turbulence or from the flight attendant checking on them.

“Are you kids thirsty? Do you want anything to eat?” she asked with a very perky Irish accent.

Sasha lifted her head and frowned at her then looked towards her brother who stared at the cart intensely. The flight attendant took the incentive and pulled out packets of cheese and crackers before Sasha gasped. “Uh, but w-we don’t have any money” Sasha spoke up.

The flight attendant gave them the brightest smile and handed them a few packets as well as cup of apple juice. “I don’t mind paying for it. We gingers have to stick together” she said proudly.

“Oh, um...thank you” Sasha muttered staring at the donations sitting on the table in front of her. She grabbed the front of her long shiny auburn hair and moved it to the side of her face revealing her beautiful vivid green eyes. “How long before we make it to Portland?” she spoke softly.

“Should be soon...do you see that mountain down there?”

“Which one? You mean the one with snow on it?” Todd asked as he pressed his nose up against the window.

“What do you mean snow? In the middle of August?” Sasha asked skeptically.

“Yea, the mountains here get so much snow around here that in some places it never melts. Rumor has it that a lot of hikers and mountain climbers who have gone missing got forever entombed in snow” the flight attendant said.

“Jez, How many people have died or gone missing?” she asked.

"I think it's a couple hundred now...come to think of it, a lot of people go missing in the woods around here. I think it might have something to do with GPS routing them through impassable roads or ones that don't exist anymore" The flight attendant rambled.

Sasha's eyes lit up. "Do you think the forests are haunted?" she asked before her brother gulped.

"Maybe...I wouldn't doubt it"

"Um what mountain is that?" Todd interrupted before he took a sip from his juice.

"Oh, sorry, that's Mt. Hood"

"Hood? What kind of name is that?" He asked taking another sip.

"Attention Passengers, this is your captain speaking. We will be arriving at PDX in about fifteen minutes, so please get seated, buckle up, and prepare for landing" a man's voice crackled over the speakers before the seat belt sign turned on.

The flight attendant smiled at them and whispered, "I'd love to chat, but I got to go back to my spot. Enjoy the snack" she told them before ruffled his hair and backed the cart up through the corridor. Sasha relaxed and opened the packets munching on them as she looked out the window.

Once the plane landed, the flight attendant helped them disembark and navigate the terminal. She helped them with baggage claims, and she led them to the agreed meeting point. A buxom woman with orange waddled out from the bathroom. The hair on her scalp needed to be touched up, but there were remnants of faded orange in her hair still. A tall thin white haired man with a mustache walked beside her. Todd ran over to them in relief shouting, "Grandma! Grandpa!"

They smiled at him and their granddaughter before the grandmother embraced him. "Hey there kiddo! How was your trip?" she asked with her Irish accent. Todd was already in tears, but Sasha looked at her grandmother drained before she looked towards the flight attendant. "Thank you for watching them"

"It was my pleasure. Hey, you're from Cork aren't you? I thought I'd heard that accent from somewhere. What are the odds?" she asked.

Their grandmother forced a smile and laughed. "Yea, small world" she muttered lightly before she looked towards her husband.

He cleared his throat and chuckled. "We'd love to stay and chat, but we have a long drive back to Government Camp" he said with his Canadian Maritime accent.

"Oh, that's really far. Well, I hope you have a safe journey back" she said giving them a wave. Sasha waved back at her as she walked away.

“Thank you for the food!” She yelled. She was not sure if the woman heard her in the crowded terminal, but there was no time wasted as their grandmother whisked them out the front door into the parking garage. Their grandfather tossed their bags and suitcases into the back of their red Ford Explorer, while everyone escaped the hot 100°F heat. Their grandmother turned on the engine and blasted the air conditioning as cold as it could go. Sasha and Todd huffed in the back seat feeling sweat drenching the backs of their shirts wherever the seats touched.

When their Grandfather got in, Sasha groaned. “Does it normally get this hot around here? Where’s all the rain?” she asked as she wiped sweat from her brow.

Her Grandfather laughed at her. “Oh just you wait. In about a month or so you’re going to be asking where the sun gone” he told her.

Her Grandmother looked back at her and smiled. “This is the dry season. It doesn’t end until October...” she said before she trailed off. She looked down at Sasha’s chest and noticed that her breasts spilling over her bra, and she smiled. “Where going to need to get you some new bras” she said thoughtfully. She looked towards her husband and touched his arm. “Can we stop at the Fred Meyers over in Sandy on our way back?”

Sasha’s eyes widened and squirmed. She crossed her arms over her chest uncomfortably not wanting to think about her growing problem. She spaced out as they drove out of the parking garage. She stared out the window watching the cars fly past them on the other side of the road. “Oh, look at that!” her brother shouted as he pointed over at a futuristic streamlined train whooshing by them into the airport.

“That’s the light rail. They got almost a hundred miles of track going all over the place around here” Their grandfather said.

Sasha looked around and was surprised with the urban forests and greenbelts covering extinct volcanos sprinkled inside the city. Everything felt less dense than what she was used to in the cities on the East Coast. “There’s a lot of trees and mountain here. I could see how a lot of people could go missing” she said.

Her grandfather sighed heavily to that comment. “Yea, well, it’s not as bad as it has in the past” he muttered.

“What do you mean?” Sasha asked.

He made a face and looked towards his wife who was looking back at him nervously. “Oh, well...technology has changed. Not as many people go missing in the city now these days” he said.

“As many people? Just in the city?” Sasha asked.

Her grandmother looked back at her and smiled. “Just don’t worry about it. Our village is a very safe close knit community. We look after another and everyone knows everybody. We don’t have great

cell phone reception out there, like they do in the city, and the mountains make it hard for GPS to locate you, so you won't be able to use Google maps very well. Don't go wondering off from the trail or go out too far from the village, and everything should be fine" she said.

Sasha frowned. "Do you have Wifi?"

"Yes, Dear...but our internet isn't that fast. Your grandfather still uses an Ethernet cable for his work computer" Her grandmother said.

"Ethernet, what's that?" Todd asked.

"Well, back in the day, nobody had Wifi, and everyone had to hook up their computers to the telephone line, fiber optic cable, or through something like a telephone cord but it was called an Ethernet cable" She said before Todd gawked at her.

"No! There was no wifi back then!" he exclaimed.

"Nope! And do you know what? We still managed to have fun and not get bored. You kids have it way too easy these days" Their Grandfather said.

Sasha looked out her window and tuned out on her grandparents ranting about the good old days and how spoiled rotten they were. She watched the light rail line rejoin the freeway via a flyover and running up and down the center median. She felt like some of the people were staring at her as the train slowly overtook their car. She glanced over at her brother looking out through her window and he smiled. "This place is so cool!" he shouted before he looked over at the cinder cone covered with vegetation.

Their grandmother turned back and looked at Sasha with concern. "Is everything alright dear?" she asked. Sasha looked back over at the tracks and then at the train separating a larger distance between them. She did not realize that she had goosebumps all over her body, but her grandmother did. "Are you cold honey?"

Sasha rubbed her arm and shook her head. "N-n-no, I'm fine"

"You're covered in Goosebumps"

"Is it ghosts again?" Todd asked.

Sasha looked towards her grandparents fearing that they would judge her and think she was going crazy, but her grandmother surprisingly seemed to understand her. Sasha looked down and sighed. "No...not unless this car is haunted. I can't explain it. It's just...I felt like some of the people on that train were staring at me...like I was food" she said.

Her grandmother frowned biting her lip and looked towards her husband before she sighed. "Don't be silly. Why would anyone stare at you like you were food" He said.

“Marty, you don’t know what it’s like to be a woman do you? I get looks like that from others all the time” She said before she looked back at Sasha. “You have been blessed with my good looks. I’ll teach you how to be assertive around men” she with conviction.

Sasha looked at her a felt disgusted. “I’m just fat. They probably think I’m a cow or something” she muttered.

Her grandmother laughed. “You aren’t fat, Sasha. You’re just growing up. Is this all about the needing a bigger bra that’s got you all stressed out?” she asked.

Sasha shook her head. “No, I...” she raised her voice before she sank low into her seat and groaned. “I don’t want to talk about it anymore” she muttered as she grabbed a pillow and wedged it between her head and the side of the frame of the vehicle.

She closed her eyes for what she thought was only for five minutes; however, she started to feel a tingly sensation in her breasts followed by heaviness in her chest and her bra straps digging into the flesh on her shoulders. She opened her eyes and to her horror, her breasts were growing. Her heart started racing as her shirt started stretching. “Grandma! What’s happening to me!?” she shrieked as her breasts spilled out over her bra and reached her lap still swelling up like a two water balloons were being filled up to the size of basketballs.

Her grandmother laughed with amusement. “Aw, they just grow up so fast don’t they?” she teased.

Sasha started to cry as her shirt was lifted up exposing her veiny flesh for the world to see. Her darkened areola took up half her breast and her nipples turned into cow teats. “Grandma make it stop!” she pleaded.

“I can’t make it stop! Your turning into a woman” she said with great pleasure.

“Grandma look! Her butt is growing too!” Todd shouted as he pointed.

Sasha looked down at her hips and rear having doubled in size and a wave sloshing about in her fat rear and thickened thighs just like her oversized udders. “No! I’m a total freak show!” she shouted as tears streamed down her cheeks. Her hands sank into her butt like a waterbed as hairs started sprouting all over her body and going thicker

“Oh my! Looks like she’s growing fur! You’re more blessed than your mother and I put together! Keep growing sweetie!” she said watching her granddaughter expand into an unnatural immobile hourglass figure caricature.

“No! No! No!” Sasha shouted closing her eyes wishing for it all to go away. She flung her eyes open drenched in sweat, and she instantly grabbed her chest then rear to discover that she was in her original proportions. She saw that they were pulling into the Fred Meyers parking lot, and she sighed a bit of relief. “Oh thank goodness” she mumbled.

When they got inside of the department store, they split up with her grandfather taking her brother off to the toy section, and her grandmother taking her straight to the bra section. Sasha blushed and rubbed her arm nervously as her grandmother pulled out D cups with various band sizes. "Grandma...they aren't that big. I'm only 14" she said nervously.

"Just try it on. I just know what size you'll need" she said as they walked into the changing room.

As Sasha removed her own bra, she frowned as she overheard the woman at the podium gossiping to the other woman stocking the shelves about a certain 14 year old girl needing a D cup. To her dismay, her grandmother was right and she winced. "Grandma...just how are they going to get?"

"Well, that's hard to say, but you'll probably need custom bras when you are 15 or 16. When I was 18, I was in a double G cup" she said while Sasha slid her shirt back on. She paused and stared at her chest grimacing again. Her grandmother gave her a gentle pat on the back. "It'll be alright dear, you're just blessed" she said.

"Yea, more like cursed..." she said as her grandmother threw a couple bras in the cart plus the bar code of the one Sasha was wearing. She walked with Sasha through the clothes section and pulled out a list of school supplies. Sasha noticed a t-shirt with a wolf face on it, and she pulled it off. "Oh, look! It's so cool" she said.

"You like wolves huh?" Her grandmother asked with a bright smile. Sasha gave her a quick nod as she found more wolf shirts. Her grandmother giggled as she picked off a few t-shirts and sat them in the cart before she looked at some dresses. There was a loud crash as the clothes rack was knocked over by one of the stockers. Sasha started to twitch and let out what sounded like a bark, which the stocker looked up at her confused.

Sasha gasped and turned bright red before she turned away pretending that the sound she made did not exist. "Um, let's go!" she told her grandmother nervously as she touched her arm.

"Oh come now, you aren't going to let one little tic ruin your day, are ye?" Her grandmother asked.

"No, I just don't like not having control of my body. I don't like drawing attention to myself" She muttered lowly.

"You know...you've done really well suppressing them, but you shouldn't feel embarrassed or ashamed that you slipped up from something startling like that. It's a natural flight or fight response" she said patting her granddaughter's hand proudly.

"By barking?" Sasha asked sarcastically.

Her grandmother laughed and smirked at her saying, "One little bark is not a problem. I've met some people who've growled or bite when they get startled"

"Nuh-uh, you're kidding. Some people with tourettes bite?" Sasha asked.

“Well, I’m pretty sure that they don’t have tourettes...I may have exaggerated the biting, but they do bear their teeth” Her grandmother said before they wandered over to the health and beauty section. She pulled out some razor blades off the rack, and she looked towards Sasha gasping at her in horror.

“Grandma! Those are men’s razors!”

“I know...but I’m not paying the pink tax” Her grandmother said before she grabbed more cosmetics and medicine. “There ways companies will try to use vanity and culture to extort us women into paying more. Some will use our body’s natural processes to make a fortune” she said before she laughed at her. “For all these years you’ve never had a problem with wearing boy clothes or boy toys” she added.

“No...but...I’ve been made fun of for being a Tomboy” she said.

“Oh my dear, I was young like you once. If it weren’t about the way I dressed it was about my interest in the Supernatural, or that I was a big fat cow with huge udders. The more that makes you different should be celebrated. People who bully you are only insecure about themselves. Remember that” she told her as they met up with Todd and their grandfather.

After they finished their shopping for school supplies, Sasha and Todd fell asleep in the back of the car leaving behind the populated valley and entering the remote wilderness. They climbed up the flanks of the biggest mountain around, which it was the very same that the flight attendant had told them about from before. It was about a half an hour drive before they arrived at the cute little mountain town of Government Camp.

They stopped by a very popular new Ice Cream Parlor called Alpine Treats. There were a couple of tall athletic built teenagers leaving the establishment with giant waffle bowls filled with tons of ice cream. A boy with shaggy brown hair and a half Tenino girl sat beside each other on the curb enjoying their haul. When Sasha and her family got inside there was an even larger meaty teen wearing a Portland Trailblazers baseball cap and dark tinted sunglasses. “What do you mean you ran out of Peanut Butter!?” he shouted as he slammed his fist into the granite counter so hard that the row glass jars on either end of the shop rattled.

The man was average height, but this teen stood around seven feet tall, which the man was so intimidated that he instinctively backed into the wall behind him shivering. “I-I-I-I’m s-s-sorry, sir!” he said.

The teen growled at him. It was animalistic and vicious, and Sasha gasped thinking that she was seeing things, but she thought she saw fangs on the guy. “Not even Peanut Butter cups?” he asked while removing his sunglasses.

The man shook his head and gulped staring into his eyes with terror. “Those last two customers cleaned out all peanut butter related toppings!” he said pointing over at the 5 pound jar of peanut butter.

The teen snarled balling his fist up and looked out the two younger teens binging on their ice cream outside. "Those little runts!" he shouted.

The girl looked back and smirked nudging the boy. He looked up at her, and she gestured for him to look behind. After he looked back at the larger teen they laughed at him, and the girl mocked him licking the peanut butter off her finger. "No! You did not just do that!" the teen screamed stomping off towards the door.

Sasha was amazed that the door stayed on its hinges and the glass did not shatter after the amount of force put on that door made the whole side of the building shake; moreover, the two teens on the curb were more peculiar as they took off so fast that they were overtaking the cars driving down the road with a 25 mph speed limit. The larger teen took chase, and they were soon out of sight.

Sasha and Todd looked back at their grandparents' unfazed demeanor in shock and judging by some of the patrons this was commonplace for them. "Who was that!?" Sasha asked.

"That's Terry Cooper. Tch, he thinks he owns the town because his father's the Sheriff" Her grandfather said.

"He's a real fruit brute, he is!" Her Grandmother said while she crossed her arms over her chest.

"I hope he doesn't get to those kids" Todd muttered.

"Nah, they'll be fine. They do this sort of thing to him all the time. It's like a game to them" His Grandfather explained.

"Eat all the peanut butter?" Todd asked.

"That among other things" their grandfather said.

"That's really weird that he gets upset about Peanut Butter" Sasha remarked.

"You know, Peanut Butter is a commodity here. It always keeps runs out. Here, the Chevron, the Govy Store, even Timberline runs out" the shop owner commented.

"That's really really really weird. Is Terry addicted to Peanut Butter?" she asked.

"Well, there's a lot of people here with that addiction around here" he answered as he put up a sign on the counter that said, "Out of Peanut Butter, Sorry for the inconvenience"

After they finished their ice cream, they drove up the street and Sasha looked around awestruck with the view of the mountains and the river valleys. The wind whooshed through the trees and dried up pine needles fell to the ground like snow and blew across the pavement. Occasionally there would be a pop as a pine cone struck the roof of the vehicle causing Sasha to let out her adorable bark.

They pulled into the driveway of a cute small two story red house, and the wind was still howling. "Wow, It's really windy" Todd commented as they got out of the vehicle. He started to wonder around the property gawking at how quiet it was.

Sasha smiled at the house and helped her grandfather unload the back. "Why don't you help us out?" she asked as the suitcase almost pulled her down to the ground in a loud "thud!" causing her to bark again. "Dang it!" she shouted.

Her grandmother came unlocked the front door, and she turned back at her. "Sasha why don't to go inside, you have to be tired after everything you've been through. Don't worry, we'll bring everything inside" she said warmly as she opened the door. She watched Sasha walk inside and smiled at her granddaughter's reaction towards the deer and bear trophies and other taxidermies.

"Wow, this place is a lot bigger from the inside" she said as she touched the wolf taxidermy. The fur felt similar to dog's fur but the downy fur was softer than she could imagine. She was too preoccupied to hear the pitter patter of footsteps upstairs before her concentration was broken by an Alaskan Malamute jumping up and pushing her down to the ground with their tail wagging and whimpering as she slobbered plenty of doggie kisses all over Sasha's face. "Makita! Stop! I know! I missed you too!" she shouted.

Her grandmother smiled. "You know that dog has been moping on the bed since she got here. I thought ya might perk her mood up" she said before she walked over to the sliding glass door and opened it. "Hey! Go find Todd!" she said in a cute voice.

The dog climbed down from Sasha and bolted out the door, and not too soon after, both of them could hear Todd shout, "Hey! Quit licking me!"

Sasha smiled at her grandmother feeling as if nothing changed much. "Let me take you upstairs to your room" she said. Her grandfather came in and dragged some of the bags of clothes and school supplies inside. "Um Aoife, I'm sorry that I'm struggling with handling all their bags" he said passive-aggressively.

Aoife made a face and crossed her arms over her chest noticing the two teenagers running through the streets looking back. "Yer too slow fuzz butt!" the girl shouted. Aoife stepped out of the door and looked down to get a better view of the street.

"You wanna bet!" Terry shouted.

"Hey! Terry!" Aoife shouted at him firmly. He abruptly stopped in his tracks and looked over at her in confusion. Aoife waved him over, which Todd looked at her as if she had gone completely mad. "Come here! I need you to do me a favor. I got a beef stick with your name on it" she said.

He lowered his glasses and glared at her before he snorted at her. "It has gotta be one damn good beef stick" he grumbled.

Aoife reached over to the plastic jar of beef sticks and pulled one out waving it in the air outside. "It's from Tillamook" she sang.

Terry eyed the stick and went into a trace as he started walking towards her. He stopped at the end of the porch and stared at her. "What do you want lady?" he asked rudely although he sounded offended from the premise of being bribed.

"Since you're so super strong, how about you help my husband unload the car while I show my grandkids their new home...they are both so tired from their long flight from D.C." she said. Terry looked over at Todd and his dog, which the dog's ears bent back and whimpered nervously. "Hey!" She shouted snapping her fingers at him.

"Calm down lady. You don't need to treat me like a dog either" he grumbled at her.

"Well maybe if you didn't act like one, I'd treat you different. I'm asking you to be a good boy and contribute to the community like your father not terrorize it like..."

"Okay, okay, okay! I'll do it! Jez, Lady!" he interrupted her.

Sasha's jaw dropped in disbelief as her grandmother told off this seven foot tall teen like he was nothing special. "Grandma, are you sure that's such a good idea?" she asked.

Aoife looked back at her and smiled deviously. "Of course sweetie, you just got to know how to talk to people like him. We're good friends with Sheriff Cooper, so if he's ever giving you any trouble, just bring it up...it'll get under his skin real quick" she told her. Terry stopped at the driveway and looked towards her not amused. She locked eyes with him and frowned with her arms crossed over her chest displeased. "Well? What are you waiting for? Go on!" she said shooing him off.

Terry's eyes narrowed and growled ferociously like before. Todd grew nervous and quietly walked over to his grandmother for safety with his dog following close behind. His grandmother saw the sense of worry and dread in his face before she reached down to cradle the back of his head. "Don't you fret, this is a safe place. No one is going to harm you inside my home" she said as he shuffled his feet inside.

She shut the door after the dog got back inside before she clapped her hands together and grinned. "Well, shall we go upstairs to your rooms?" she asked. The two both nodded their heads and turned towards the front door at Terry grumbling as he carried twenty bags on his arm looking like a pack mule. He glared at the two intensely and snarled. Todd was first to scamper up the stairs, and Sasha looked towards her grandmother unsure.

Her grandmother only continued to smile at her and motioned her head towards the stairway. Sasha reluctantly went upstairs and her grandmother ushered them up. "Is his father also that big?"

"Oh no my dear...his father is absolutely massive...He's a head taller than Scary Terry. He's a very pleasant gentleman to be around once you get to know him" She informed them. She pointed up

another flight of stairs. "Now I know it's not much, but we worked real hard on converting our attic into bedroom..." she said as she walked up to one of the doors and opened it slowly while watching Sasha's reaction.

Sasha's face lit up noticing her nice comfy queen sized bed in front of the window and the old stove with clawed feet the shape of a can complimenting the old rustic feel of the room. "Oh wow, it's so cozy" she said before she walked in spinning around to see what else was inside. "How did you manage to fit all my stuff in here?" she asked as she reached over to touch her wolf plushie on the desk.

"Well, we tried to fit everything. I had to make some arrangements in the study to fit your bookshelves. If the walls weren't slanted, I can guarantee that they would have been in here" She said before she pointed over at the stove. "That pot belly stove is over a hundred years old and it still works. I'll show you how to use it safely during the winter" she said.

"I helped move that thing in here" Terry said startling both Todd and Sasha. Sasha once again barked at him, and he raised an eyebrow at her before he sat her suitcases on the floor and glanced over at the plushies and other wolf themed objects. "I like your taste in animals, kid. Are you some kind of furry?" he asked.

"Are you a furry?" Sasha retorted.

Terry was taken aback with her snappy comeback, and he looked at her grandmother horrified. "You told her!? Why would you do something like that?" he shouted.

Their grandmother scowled at him and shook her head at him. "I told her no such thing. She's just very smart"

"Didn't you call him a fruit brute though?"

"Oh dear, I guess I did. Funny how things can slip off the tongue"

Todd looked at them dumbfounded. "Grandma, what's a furry?"

Terry growled at him. "I'm not a goddamn furry!" he raised his voice before he stormed off blowing past their grandfather with an angry scowl.

Once he got out of the house, her grandparents burst out laughing uncontrollably as she looked at them oddly. "What? Was it what I said?" she asked.

"Well, if you know what we know, it's pretty funny" Her grandfather said as he leaned up against the handrail. "Heh, heh, Furry...that's priceless. The look on his face too" he said with tears streaming down his face.

After they shown Todd his room, the two of them plopped back onto the bed and listened to pine cone bouncing off the roof and, the wind whistling against the house. Strange

enough, it had a hypnotic effect as they drifted into a deep slumber. Todd's room was on the opposite end of the house with a similar layout as Sasha's.

They woke up eight hours later when it was starting to get dark outside. The scent of beef stew and dumplings drifted up the stairs causing their stomachs to ping. They both jumped down onto the cool floor boards creaking along as they walked towards the stairway. They could hear their grandfather talking to someone outside through a cracked open window, whoever it was had a very deep voice that was on the edge of baritone and bass. Sasha poked her head out from around the curtain as she saw him.

Standing seven foot six inches with a beer belly was the burly sheriff leaning against his squad car looking down at him. It was hard to make out what they were talking about as if they were speaking in some kind of code. "What did you find? Did someone get hungry?" Her grandfather asked.

"No, I don't believe that to be the case this time. I haven't seen a case like this in decades" the sheriff admitted.

Todd pushed his head up against Sasha's hip as he squeezed in. "What is it?" he muttered.

Sasha looked down at him annoyed and moved back enough for him to fit in. "Ssssh, They'll hear you! Doofus!" Sasha muttered as she turned her head. She gasped in horror as the sheriff looked straight at them. His eyes felt like those on the train from earlier, and her hairs stood up on the back of her neck. She froze up knowing she was spotted, and her little brother gulped feeling a similar sense as his sister.

The sheriff's eyes softened up somewhat before he smirked gesturing towards them. "I see your grandkids as just as nosy as your wife, eh?" he asked.

Marty looked back at the window briefly and sighed. "Sorry. Our family is very observant naturally"

"Heh, that's a very necessary trait to have around these parts" the sheriff said with a slight menace in his tone.

"Oh, I forgot to ask. How is your daughter doing? I heard that she went through her changes not too long ago" Marty asked.

The sheriff glanced over at him and smiled. "She's doing just fine. Naturally with all those hormones she has been acting strangely. A couple nights ago, I caught her cleaning that boy's meat" he said.

"Oh, wow, I can imagine. She must be a real handful to deal with"

"Heh, this isn't my first rodeo, Marty. I've raised teenage girls before" The sheriff muttered before he looked back up at Sasha amused. "You're going to need to freshen up on that. You might be a little rusty. You aren't just a grandpa anymore" he advised him.

“Think I’ll manage just fine”

Sasha and Todd were both startled when their grandmother came up behind them and touched their shoulders. “Supper is getting cold” she told them while smiling mischievously at their reactions. “Oh, did I scare you?”

“No!” Todd shouted abruptly.

His grandmother rolled her eyes at him before she frowned looking out the window. “Hun! How long are you going to chat for? Your supper is getting cold!” she hollered at him.

“I’ll be right in dear!” he shouted.

She glanced at the sheriff and blushed. “Oh, hi Bernie...what brings you here? Are you hungry?” she asked.

Bernie gulped and shifted his stance and chuckled a bit. “You know...the usual, work” he said casually before his stomach growled answering her other question. There was something unsettling about how loud and monstrous his stomach sounded. “Well, I better head off now. Don’t want to wolf out in front of your grandchildren” he said nervously.

“Yea, that’s probably for the best” she remarked as he got back into the squad car. He looked back up at them and waved before he drove off.

Sasha and Todd looked at her curiously as she tidied up the curtains. “Was that scary Terry’s dad?” Todd asked.

“What does he want with Grandpa?” Sasha added.

“I told you that we’re very good friends didn’t I? He chats with us every once in a while” She answered as she escorted them into the dining room. “Why do you ask?” she asked.

“I-I-I just...something doesn’t feel right” Sasha muttered as she rubbed her arm trying to not look her in the eye. She felt like her grandmother would not believe her, and her guffaw only exasperated that feeling.

“I get that feeling around him too. I told you he’s a real sweet guy when you get to know him” She spoke softly while she sat down in front of the bowls of stew. “I don’t get those feelings as often now” she muttered.

Marty came inside and sat next to her. She looked up into his eyes as could see the troubled look he had before he tried to conceal it. Sasha saw it as well, but she knew they were hiding something from them. Todd ate his meal unaware of the awkward silence that filled the room. “I want you to make sure not to go out at night tonight” Marty said.

Todd stopped eating and looked up at them oddly. “Why?” he asked.

Marty gave him a stern look. "I think you all should get some rest to adjust to our time zone" he suggested.

"But I'm not tired" Todd complained.

"You don't have to sleep...just don't wake us up with your video games and youtube" Their grandmother said told them.

While they finished up their dessert, Sasha felt something furry on top of her lap blowing hot air into her stomach. She lifted up the table cloth seeing a pair of eyes looking up at her. "Makita, what's wrong girl?" she asked. Her dog whimpered with her ears turned back flat against her head as she flicked her tongue out repeatedly. "Grandma? Why is she hiding under the table?"

Her grandparents looked at each other before they shrugged. "I'm not sure. She gets like this from time to time. There's no rhyme or reason to it" their grandmother said.

"Well I think it's best to head for bed" their grandfather interrupted them as he scooted his chair back. When he stood up, he gave Sasha a troubled look and took a deep breath about to say something to her, but he hesitated unsure with whether or not what he had to say was appropriate for the situation. Instead he walked towards the stairway before there was a howl outside not like the persistent gusty wind against the house.

Neither Sasha or Todd heard it, and he looked back towards the dog cowering underneath the table. "Good night..." he said wearily. He scaled the stairs with haste, and he rushed into his room slamming the door shut.

Sasha frowned sensing his tone and looked towards her grandmother. "Is he okay? He's acting all strange all of the sudden"

"I'm not sure...I think he needs his space right now" she told her before there was a loud crash and cursing upstairs. She quickly got up out of her seat and wondered towards the steps. "I'm going to go check on your grandfather. Oh, would you be a dear and clean the dishes for me? That would be real helpful" she suggested.

"Okay..." Sasha said lowly watching her grandmother next to go up the stairs. She went quiet listening to her grandmother enter the bedroom and locked the door. "That's really weird" she muttered. Nothing happened afterwards, so she gathered all the dishes and started to clean them. Todd pulled out his smartphone and began to play video games on the couch. Light from the full moon filtered in through the curtains, which it caught his attention once he died in his game.

He shoved his phone into his pocket and walked past Sasha going out the sliding glass door. The winds died down and the moon filtered through the trees over the roof of the house. Todd looked up at the sky and shouted. "Hey! Sasha! Look at the sky! What is it!?" he shouted.

"It's the moon Todd!" Sasha said with disinterest as she sat the dishes on the drying rack.

“No no! What’s that cloud stuff! That don’t look normal!” he shouted.

Sasha sighed heavily and sat the towel onto the counter walked outside. She looked to where he was pointing, and she squinted her eyes initially then gasped in awe. “Whoa! You can see the whole Milky Way out here!” she shouted.

“Milky way!? What’s that?”

“It’s the Galaxy that we live in”

“What’s a Galaxy?” Todd asked as he pulled out his camera and aimed it at the sky trying to take a picture. “Dang it! It’s not showing up on my camera!” he muttered.

“Adjust the exposure” Sasha said as she started aiming her camera at the sky taking a picture. She then showed him her photo, and he scowled at her.

“Hey! Help me!” He shouted handing her his phone. She laughed at him and adjusted the setting on his phone before she heard growling coming from behind them. “Makita! Stop it!” she raised her voice. She felt Todd grab onto her arm and shake it roughly.

“Hey! Makita is over there!” he raised his voice pointing towards the porch. The growling grew louder and sounded way deeper than Makita’s, and their dog started barking at them. Sasha looked back at two glowing yellow eyes in the forest standing tall and slowly drawing closer.

“Is that a bear?” Todd asked as he backed up.

Sasha turned the flash on the camera as she backed up with him. “I don’t know, but you run inside!” she raised her voice.

Todd took off before Sasha took a picture, and the creature yelped in pain grabbing its eyes while Sasha ran back inside. She flung the door shut and grabbed her brother running into a closet with her dog. They both gasped trying to catch their breaths as Sasha looked at the picture.

“What the heck was that, Sasha!?” He shouted.

“I don’t know...but it wasn’t a bear! That thing is freaking huge!” she said showing him the picture.

Todd winced seeing the picture. “Is that thing why everyone is acting weird?” he asked.

Just then they heard the door fling open, and they both screamed not expecting it to be their grandparents. They looked down at them oddly as Makita looked up at them whimpering. “What all this commotion about!? Do you want to wake up the neighbors!?” their grandfather shouted.

Their grandmother grew concerned as she walked farther down the steps while holding up her robe. “What’s wrong? You two look like you’ve seen a ghost” she asked.

Sasha showed them the picture they took. "What the heck is this thing!?" she shouted.

Her grandfather took the phone and squinted his eyes. "I'm not sure...let me get my reading glasses" he muttered as he reached for the glasses in his pocket. He took another look as his wife looked over his shoulder with her mouth hung open. He frowned unimpressed and huffed. "Hmph, It's just a bear...nothing to be excited about" he said as he relinquished the phone to his wife.

"Do you have other pictures?" She asked as she opened Todd's image gallery. There was none, and a message popped up, which she gasped. "Oh no! I deleted it!" she shrieked.

"You what!?" Todd asked.

"Oh no..." Sasha muttered.

"Alright, you kids get straight to bed you hear!? No running around outside at night...understood? I thought you two knew better!" Their grandfather scolded them, while he reached for his rifle and flashlight before he walked outside.

Their grandmother frowned at them in disappointment. "You don't know how lucky you are. Most the predators around here hunt at night. You could have ended up being in a wolf's belly if you wondered too far off" she told them before she pointed up the stairs. "Now will you please get ready for bed and get some sleep" she instructed them.

When they went upstairs, their grandfather walked back in, and he placed his gun and flashlight into the closet. She crossed her arms over her chest and rubbed her arms trying to get rid of her goosebumps. "Well did you see them? Was it a teenager?" she asked.

"I dunno who it was...I never saw that one before. That thing was too big to be a teenager...it was bigger than most adults. But I am for certain that they aren't from around here. I'll give Bernie a call after his family picnic" he muttered.

"Did I do the right thing in deleting it?" she whispered.

"Yea, I would suggest you shut off the wifi before they draw too much attention...alright?" He murmured.

She nodded before she looked up at Todd looking down at them. She frowned at him sighing wearily. "Todd, it's not polite to eavesdrop" she lectured him. He ran upstairs, and she followed him up. She walked over to the table in the den reaching for the modem, and she unplugged it from the power and the Ethernet cord. Todd was horrified seeing her take it into her bedroom.

He quickly rushed over to Sasha in the bathroom while she was brushing her teeth telling her, "Sasha! They took away the wifi! What are we going to do!?"

"It's called being grounded you dweeb!" Sasha muttered before she spat into the sink.