

Black Snow

Ryan Engverson

Thomas looked out the window into the thick blanket of white covering the landscape. The snow was coming down hard and there was no sign it was going to stop anytime soon. It was starting to get dark. His wife began to wake up in the seat next to him.

“Have they called back yet?” Janet asked.

“Not yet. We’ll be fine,” Thomas said.

“People have frozen to death.”

“We have blankets and hand warmers in the backseat. I’ll stay awake till someone arrives.”

Thomas heard his cell phone ringing. He reached into his pocket. Janet sat and waited till Thomas was done talking. He put down his phone and looked down at the wheel.

“What did they say?”

“There’s no chance of right now. With the snow they can’t get here till morning. They said if we could see any buildings within a ten minute walk that we should try to get to them. Hopefully we can find someone who lives out here.”

“I don’t like the idea of staying the night with a stranger.”

They sat in silence trying to stay warm. Thomas looked in the backseat and watched his son Jack sleep. Thomas looked outside. He couldn’t even see five feet out. How were they supposed to know if someone was living out there?

“I’m going out I’ll be back in about twenty minutes,” Thomas said.

“Are you sure?”

“It’s worth a look.”

“Be careful.”

Janet wrapped the blanket around her body tight as Thomas got out of the car. The slam of the car door woke Jack up.

“Where’s daddy going?”

“Don’t worry honey he’s just going to find us a better place to spend the night, he’ll be back soon.”

Thomas kept walking hoping he would find something. The feeling of frostbite almost completely covered Thomas’ body now. Finally he came upon a house. When he got closer he could see that it was abandoned. All of the paint on the outside had peeled away. Thomas tried the door and it swung open easily enough. Looking inside he saw a staircase right in front of him that led upstairs. To the right was the kitchen, which contained a door that led to the basement, and to the left was the living room that led to a study like room. Walking in Thomas noticed a lot of things had been left behind. He walked over to a table near the window in the living room. After staring at several decorative items for a moment he picked up a picture frame that contained a very old photo of a husband, wife, and their son. The faces in the picture had been worn away beyond recognition. He set the picture down and headed upstairs. Every time he stepped on one of the steps it made a very high pitched creaking sound. When he got to the top he found the upstairs was just a straight hallway with two bedrooms on the right and a bathroom on the left. There was a storage closet at the very end of the

hallway. Opening it Thomas was blasted in the face by a cloud of dust. Looking inside he saw nothing but old clothes and towels. He could tell that nothing in this closet had been messed with for a very long time. There was a strong smell of mold.

Thomas thought about it for a moment then decided they would stay the night in the house. He felt a lot warmer and safer in the home than out in the car.

The night had completely taken over outside. There was a full moon. It helped a little bit. The blizzard hadn't completely covered the trail Thomas made getting to the house.

Janet was startled awake by the sound of Thomas getting back into the car. With a hoarse voice she asked, "Did you find anything?"

"Yea, wake Jake up and grab a couple of flashlights."

Janet did as Thomas asked. Together they ventured from the car into the dark cold. When they arrived at the house everyone rushed inside patting themselves down, getting rid of the snow, and rubbing their arms together to get warm.

"Most of the belongings of the previous owners are still here. It's a good thing for us because it means we have a lot of stuff to use around here." Pointing his flashlight at his son Thomas said, "I want you to go upstairs, there are two bedrooms up there, grab the blankets that are on the bed and bring them back down. Can you do that for me?"

"It's dark up there!"

"Don't worry you have your flashlight and if you need anything just call out and I'll come up. I've already been up there. There is nothing to be scared of."

"Ok," Jack said quietly under his breath.

Pointing his light at Janet Thomas said, "Go downstairs and see if there is any gasoline, also check for any metal buckets or pans that might be good to start a small fire in. I'll stay up here and look for stuff to burn and something to light the fire with."

Jack started up the stairs slowly, afraid of the darkness at the top. He cringed with every sound the staircase made. Making it to the top he rushed to the first room wanting to get back to his parents as fast as possible. When Jack entered the room he was sure it was another kid's room because it was similar to his. It had a smaller bed and there were shelves with toys. Really old toys with dust covering them. He walked over to the bed and placed the flashlight on the ground so he could pull the blankets off with both hands. His initial pull was too strong and the covers came off too fast for Jack. He fell hard against the wood floor and at the same moment he heard the door slam shut. Panicking he jumped up. Forgetting about the covers that he had just pulled to the floor he tripped and fell. This time face first. He stretched his arms out and was able to grab a hold of the flashlight. Jack didn't care about the blankets anymore he just wanted to run downstairs. Going to open door he was scared by an image that had appeared in the mirror attached to the back of the door. In the mirror he saw the image of a deathly thin and pale boy behind him. The boy's hair was short and ragged. He was wearing a pair of old and torn overalls. Jack twirled around to see the boy was actually in the room with him. He tried to scream but his voice had left him. Dropping the flashlight he could no longer see in the pitch blackness of the room but he could hear the deathly kid sliding towards him. Jack was frozen to the spot with fear. He wanted to move but couldn't. Feeling the leathery arms of the child wrap around him Jack finally screamed.

He tried to escape but the grip was too tight. As the life was being squeezed out of him he could hear a scraping sound coming from outside the room.

Janet couldn't stand the strong mildew smell in the basement. The light from the flashlight was nearly swallowed up by the darkness. She moved through the basement feeling the cold air that radiated from the concrete floor and dirt walls. As she was scuffling around she bumped into something. Pointing the light down she saw it was a metal bucket, something to start a small fire in. She picked it up and headed back for the stairs, "Thomas I found something we can start a fire in!"

The basement door slammed shut and she was left abandoned in the darkness. She heard the sound of digging and scrapping. She swung the flashlight looking for the source of the sound. The light passed over a spot along the wall that had collapsed. Emerging from the collapsed area was a short middle-aged woman. She had long gray hair that matched the aura of death surrounding her. Janet barley let out a scream as the woman scrapped her feet along the floor moving closer and closer. Janet ran up the stairs and tried breaking down the door but didn't have the strength to. Turning the light towards the thing that was coming towards her she saw the woman was nothing but rotten flesh and her eyes were filled with hunger. As it moved closer Janet screamed, "No, please god no! Leave me alone!" She curled up and refused to look at the woman coming towards her. Janet could tell when it was standing over her. She could hear its breathing and feel the drops of saliva that had begun to fall from its mouth. Janet braced herself as it bent down.

Thomas slammed another drawer shut, "Damn it! Isn't there anything I can use?" He tried another drawer but found nothing. Even after going through all the cabinets he still had nothing. He was getting tired and just wanted to warm up and go to sleep. Thomas heard Janet call up to him from the basement. But as he was about to yell back down to her the basement door slammed shut. Struggling to get the door open he heard his son scream upstairs. He let go of the door handle and rushed towards the sound of his son. As he reached the foot of the stairs he heard a high pitched scrapping sound that emanated from the top. He pointed his flashlight up and glimpsed the outline of a figure emerging from the darkness. The figure took heavy steps down the stairs and drug a heavy shovel. Thomas couldn't move. The figure was a tall man with rotting flesh that dripped like water from his bones. His hair was short and black with little bits falling out every time he took a step. Thomas tried his best to order his muscles to move. But his entire body had locked up. Deep down he knew death was coming so why try fighting it. Finally the man stood inches from Thomas. The man raised the shovel and smashed it down on Thomas' head. Thomas was immediately brought to the ground. He heard his skull crack. His vision blurred and he could feel the blood oozing from the side of his head. As he tried to crawl away he felt a sharp and deep pain in his legs. He looked back and saw that the man had driven the end of the shovel through his legs. Thomas couldn't hold on any longer.

Steve pulled up in front of the abandoned car. He got out and hooked it up to the tow truck. After he had finished he saw the remnants of partially snowed in footprints.

He followed them till they stopped. Steve looked out into the clear morning and could see nothing for miles.