

Luke Jackson

If You Go Into the Woods

Written between 4:30-5:30pm, Thursday, January 12

If you go into the woods behind the little school, and walk deep into the forest, you'll find an old wooden shack. Termites have gnawed through the wood, leaving it weak and spotted. Fragments of light shine through, glimmering as if thousands of small eyes, staring, watching. A tattered crown of twigs and leaves sit on this weak frame acting as a roof. A subtle hint that something once called it home.

If you walk into the open doorless maw, you'll find rows and rows of glass jars, all stained by the erosion of time. Inside the jars are spiders' blood, legs of salamanders, ears of rabbits. Each jar houses a new and disgusting concoction.

If you move past the jars, you'll find a lopsided bruised bulging burlap sack. Though the sack appears to have gone untouched for many nights, it is clear that there is something inside. Something that once pleaded to be let out.

If you open the sack, you'll be met with a plume of unearthly sour dust. The dust will reach out into your lungs and inhabit your sinuses. As it clears, you'll notice what was once a boy, a boy who was good. A boy who once had skin, and brains, and blood, but is now only bones. A boy who once went to the little school. Who like you, went into the woods behind. Unlike you, as he walked deep into the forest and found the old wooden shack, he found that what occupied it, was still there.

She, who lived there, was tattered, beleaguered, and sharp. Yet, despite this, her voice was kind. She pleaded for help from the boy. The boy, who was good, felt that helping was the right thing to do, but he was still frightened. She told him there was no need to be nervous as she welcomed him inside.

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Spiders, salamanders, and red eyed rabbits sat motionless on the dirt floor of the shack. She said it was all she had to eat, but she was too weak to pull the carcass apart. The boy easily took the legs off the spiders and salamanders, painting the dirt with strange blood as the creatures became unspun. The boy left the rabbits, for he feared them most of all. She, who had an appetite for fear, prompted the boy to continue. The boy hesitated and pointed to the red eyes. She simply prompted once more. The boy, with shaken hands, grasped upon the limp rabbit. She nodded as he began to pull at the legs. The boy's eyes filled with tears as the last strength of the limp rabbit held it together. The boy, breathless, weeping, placed the still together rabbit back in the dirt and dropped his head. The boy couldn't do it.

She, who lived there, became angry. Hot rage shot from her eyes and skin as she fell upon the boy. Nails and teeth tore at flesh and muscle as the boy was ripped and ravaged. Skin, and bone, and brains, fell from the boy who was mercilessly dragged from his life. Soon, she feasted on the boy. Soon, she who lived there, was no longer weak and hungry, but strong and full. Soon, the boy, who was good, was no more than bones.

If you go into the woods behind the little school, and walk deep into the forest, you'll find an old wooden shack. An old wooden shack where two went in but one came out. The woods are dense, and dark, and deep, and best left alone. There are witches in these woods.