

Eyes in the Woods

Written by

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Two OLDER MEN dressed in nearly identical plaid shirts and khaki pants are chatting on the sidewalk, soaking in one of the final days of summer, sweating profusely and enjoying every minute of it.

Their VOICES are not their own, they're being mocked from an overlooking window from within an overlooking bedroom. SAMANTHA and BROOKLYN imagine what older men's conversation might sound like.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

Hey Dan saw ya took the kids out to the lake today.

BROOKLYN (O.S.)

Sure did Steve.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

Wowee good day for it too.

BROOKLYN (O.S.)

You said it.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

Howabout this heat? Sick of it yet?

BROOKLYN (O.S.)

Yessir.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)

Any big plans for the rest of yer summer?

SAMANTHA

Oh ya know just trying to remember the day of the week.

BROOKLYN

Oh same here.

SAMANTHA (14) and BROOKLYN (16) are lying on a bed facing towards their front street.

Samantha has a microscope beside various dried plants and collected bugs. The room is full of dog-eared books, old scout badges, posters and memorabilia from someone enthralled with the outdoors but is decidedly tidy with only an empty

suitcase laying open on the floor.

Samantha is wearing a bright shirt with overalls while Brooklyn, in stark contrast, wears a dark band shirt with ripped black jeans.

The door behind them slowly opens and a paint splattered hand reaches in.

JACK

You kids having fun?

JACK (46) has a buttoned up shirt with white paint stains all around the sleeves, he stands in the doorway and wipes his hands with a wet rag.

JACK (CONT'D)

I just finished up work and your mom is on her way home. (beat) Samantha! You haven't even started packing? I want to be on the road in 15 minutes. You've got to hurry it up.

Brooklyn excitedly leaps from the bed.

BROOKLYN

I'm packed!

Samantha quickly turns back to the two Old Men. She raises a 35mm camera and snaps a photo before the moment passes.

Brooklyn squeaks past Jack leaving him giving Samantha a discerning look.

JACK

Make sure you're ready Sam. I don't want to be waiting for you.

SAMANTHA

Okay.

JACK

Are you?

SAMANTHA

I'm fine.

JACK

Perfect, you two are going to have a great time. You always do!

CUT TO

3 INT. BEDROOM - DAY

3

SAMANTHA is lying on her bed trying to find patterns in the stucco ceiling. Her suitcase lays packed on the ground.

There's a KNOCK on the door.

JACK (O.S.)

Samantha you know we don't allow
locked doors in this house.

SAMANTHA

Maybe you should remove the locks if
you don't want us locking them.

JACK (O.S.)

Sam I promised your mother we would be
in the car by the time she got here.

CUT TO

The door to the bedroom slowly opens. Samantha looks
downcast.

JACK and BROOKLYN are standing in the doorway.

SAMANTHA

Sorry.

Jack steps forward and kneels down. Brooklyn stands behind
him in the doorway, arms crossed.

JACK

What's wrong, Sam, you love the
forest. (beat) Don't you?

He gestures to Sam's nature inspired room.

JACK (CONT'D)

Are you sure you're okay?

Sam pauses for a moment, she looks to Brooklyn. Brooklyn
shakes her head violently as if to say "don't you dare", Sam
is withholding something.

Sam makes up her mind.

SAMANTHA

(lying)

I like the forest, I just don't like
the forest at night.

Jack gives her a hug.

JACK

It's a couple nights, that's all. And
best of all: you can sleep through
both of them.

4 EXT. HOUSE FRONT - DAY

4

An old station wagon pulls up the driveway and VERNA steps
out looking very excited.

JACK, BROOKLYN, and SAMANTHA exit the house, travel suitcases
in hand. Jack walks over to Verna and gives her a kiss. They
laugh about something unheard.

Brooklyn sighs and heaves her bag into the trunk of the car.

Samantha drags hers behind. Brooklyn notices, grabs the bag
and heaves it in, she looks towards her parents and her face
twists into a smile and she puts a hand over Sam's eyes.

BROOKLYN

Avert your eyes, you're too young.

5 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

5

The station wagon snakes along the highway towards the
mountains.

6 EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

6

The car makes its way up a smaller road into a heavily
forested area.

7 EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

7

The paved road gives way to gravel and a cloud of dust erupts
behind the car.

8 EXT. TICKET STATION - DAY

8

A small wooden shack with a pointed roof and hand carved
painted letter's reads INFO barely sticks out of the trees on
the side of the road.

The station wagon pulls up beside and JACK hops out with a brown paper bag in his hands.

Jack approaches the shack, it has a map of the area pinned to the outside, forest pamphlets and a ticket window with a 'bear in area' sign taped to it.

In the car SAMANTHA turns away, visibly grumpy, and leans on the window looking out into the forest.

Jack hits his knuckles against the window and the figure of a park ranger stands up, the warning poster covering their face.

RANGER NORTON

Hello! Sorry, did you need directions?

JACK

Norton. It's me, Jack.

RANGER NORTON

Jack? I shoul'da known! One second and I'll greet you proper.

The side door to the shack opens and NORTON (37) pops his head out. He waves.

RANGER NORTON

Howdy family! Happy summer!

Ranger Norton steps outside dressed head to toe in stereotypical ranger gear with all manner of tools and trinkets organized on his belt.

He gives Jack a handshake then puts his hands on his hips.

JACK

You've been doing well, Norton?

RANGER NORTON

Couldn't be happier, love it out here of course, love seeing the whole family out here too!

JACK

Just the girls actually.

Jack hands over the brown paper bag. Norton glances around nervously then looks up.

He touches a finger to his nose a couple times and winks.

RANGER NORTON

I see, I see. Well, you got it Jack. They're safe as a safe under mine and, uh, Octavia's supervision.

Jack feels remorse for a moment.

JACK

Thanks, I mean, you know how hard it is to get any time along with your significant other these days. It's just for the weekend though. I'm back painting on Monday morning.

RANGER NORTON

For sure, Jack. I wish more folk could come up and enjoy the park. Been mighty quiet around here recently.

JACK

Really? Bad weather or something?

RANGER NORTON

Not a drop of rain, and get this: no fire bans either. How unlikely is that! Still real quiet though.

Jack looks back at the car to VERNA, he's doesn't want to waste time here.

JACK

Tell you what: next time Verna and I will come up too. I gotta run.

RANGER NORTON

Sure thing! Your girls got a line to our office if they run into any trouble!

On his way back to the car Jack waves over his shoulder.

JACK

Thanks again Norton!

9 EXT. CABIN - LATE DAY

9

The station wagon pulls in front of a sturdy looking log cabin. Jack hauls the girls bags out of the trunk while VERNA hugs them goodbye.

VERNA

You know I really appreciate how grown up you two are being out all by yourselves. I hope you have a great time.

SAMANTHA

We will.

VERNA

Perfect. I love you.

SAMANTHA

I love you you too Mum.

Jack lights up a cigarette.

JACK

If we hurry we'll beat the rush hour traffic.

Verna shoots him a look. Jack walks over to give the girls a hug as well.

JACK

I love you both. The water should be working. Stay safe, and call Octavia if anything breaks.

He thinks for a moment.

JACK (CONT'D)

Call Norton as a last resort.

BROOKLYN

Love you too.

Jack and Verna quickly enter the vehicle and speed away kicking up rocks and leaving Sam and Brooklyn standing alone. As her parents get farther away the cabin looms larger and larger overhead.

Brooklyn turns and enters but Samantha continues to watch as her parents disappear into the dense forest.

10 INT. CABIN - LATE DAY

10

BROOKLYN is already laying down on the second floor bed listening to her music when SAMANTHA enters their family cabin. Dusty light streams through the patterned curtains and onto a well loved and well decorated interior. There are

family photos but only from when the girls were very young. Things were better back then it seems. The rock music fills the cabin and Sam falls face first onto the couch.

Moments later a pillow from above lightly hits her in the head. Sam reaches for it and tosses it back.

Brooklyn bounces down the stairs toward the couch.

BROOKLYN
Hey Sam. Thank you.

SAMANTHA
You're welcome.

BROOKLYN
I know you're not afraid of the dark.
Thanks for not telling Dad.

SAMANTHA
Is she coming over?

BROOKLYN
Maybe tomorrow, something's happening
with her mom tonight I guess.

Brooklyn swings over the couch and sits beside Samantha.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)

So it's just you, me and popcorn? Movies?

Samantha smiles.

Brooklyn hops back over the couch and heads towards a pantry. Samantha begins looking through a pile of low budget classic cabin DVD's.

A shadow moves outside the window.

Samantha sighs, she's not surprised.

She drops the DVDs and slouches back into the couch. The back door to the cabin opens.

NATASHA enters, feigning stealth but BROOKLYN instantly notices.

BROOKLYN
Nat! What! You're not supposed to be
here.

Natasha hugs Brooklyn.

NATASHA

And where would you rather I be?

They kiss quickly. Samantha turns away, very grumpy. Brooklyn looks over.

BROOKLYN

We're going to watch a movie, you can join.

The microwave beeps and Brooklyn heads over to collect the popcorn. Natasha come around to sit beside Samantha.

NATASHA

Hi Sam.

SAMANTHA

Hi Natasha.

They sit in silence for an awkward moment. Sam gets up just as Brooklyn comes over already munching some popcorn.

BROOKLYN

Sam, come on. Don't be a jerk.

SAMANTHA

I'm not? Watch whatever you want I'm just going to take some photos before the light's completely gone.

Sam turns to dig through her bag and pulls out a couple cameras. Brooklyn looks to Natasha but she nods as though it's okay.

Samantha doesn't turn to say goodbye as she quickly exits the cabin.

11 EXT. CABIN - SUNSET

11

SAMANTHA stops in front the door; listening behind her without turning around. For a moment there's silence, but then the sound of LAUGHTER is heard from inside.

Sam sighs and heads into the forest.

12 EXT. FOREST - SUNSET

12

The sun is almost below the tree line as SAM walks through the forest. The trees tower above her as she wanders

aimlessly.

Kicking a pile of dirt.

Tossing a stick.

Watching a squirrel bound effortlessly through some trees.

She sits down and a clear patch of grass overlooking the rolling foothills. Sam absentmindedly scans the tree line and notices something move.

She fumbles through her cameras and grabs the one with the longest lens and points it forward.

Not satisfied and suddenly intensely curious she hops up and starts running towards the trees.

Very quickly Sam finds herself enveloped by trees that quickly grow more dense. Realizing it's no longer safe to continue at her break-neck speed she slows down.

Then she stops. And listens.

Nearby there's a soft crunch of leaves, not too loud to disturb the forest and not too fast to feel threatening.

Then, another crunch.

This time Sam notices a slightly brighter patch of forest.

The sun is below the treeline and the forest is quickly growing darker and bluer but a small patch of soft green light illuminates the underbrush.

Careful of the ground beneath her she tries to move closer without getting caught. Concentrating on uneven ground she snaps her gaze forward to see what looks like a single pale orb deep in the ever darkening woods.

The orb stays still but quietly shifts into two pale eyes accompanied by a crunch of soft leaves.

The eyes continue moving quietly through the trees. Sam takes out a Polaroid and moves to take a photograph.

The flash goes off.

The eyes stop moving.

Sam freezes, trying to decide if that photo was worth while.

All of sudden the eyes start moving quickly and without a second thought Sam turns on her heels and runs back through the forest.

Her feet hit the ground hard as she tears back towards the cabin. She clutches the Polaroid photo tightly.

13 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

13

SAMANTHA continues and comes out onto a road. She picks up speed.

Suddenly, a single light flares up in front of her and she screeches to a halt and ends up sitting facing the approaching light.

The light wanders even closer. It's coming from WARDEN OCTAVIA's (43) flashlight. She wears a neatly pressed park uniform.

OCTAVIA

Hello?

SAMANTHA

Um, hello.

OCTAVIA

Aren't you Jack's kid?

SAMANTHA

Yes.

Samantha grips the Polaroid photo. Octavia notices.

OCTAVIA

What are you doing out here?

14 INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

14

A blurry photo with the "eyes" is seen in the hands of RANGER NORTON.

RANGER NORTON

Well, uh, it's a cougar or, maybe even a bear I think!

SAMANTHA stands, arms crossed, not entertaining any of the ranger's interpretations of the photograph.

BROOKLYN stands behind her supporting while NATASHA stands on Norton's side beside WARDEN OCTAVIA, her mother.

The office is small but not cramped. It looks like they've dedicated entirely too much room to a waiting area. There are posters of various activity's, maps of trails, and one too many taxidermy animals scattered around the floor.

Norman is leaning against his desk, a mess of paperwork pushed against a collage of badges and dried plants.

Octavia steps closer to Samantha trying to reassure her.

OCTAVIA

When you take a photo, especially of, say a cat, you can see the light reflected back in their eyes. That's all this is.

SAMANTHA

It's eyes were glowing before I took the photo.

OCTAVIA

Then another source of light must have been reflecting back at you.

SAMANTHA

The sun was down.

OCTAVIA

Sorry, I don't what else to tell you. It's just some eyes in the woods.

She snatches the photo from Norton who is still puzzling over it.

RANGER NORTON

Hey I thought I was getting something, if you sort of un-focus your eyes you can almost, see through it you know!

Octavia hands the photo to Samantha.

She doesn't accept it. Octavia pockets it instead.

OCTAVIA

Even if we wanted to do something about this we couldn't, in fact actually, we've already done all we can.

The camera pans over to a "bear in area" poster and then back to Octavia.

OCTAVIA (CONT'D)

Do you have anything to add Norton.

It's clear she's not really expecting a response.

NORTON

Maybe if we have her draw this monster, creature, then we could use that.

OCTAVIA

That's nonsense. Thank you for bringing Natasha back before curfew, maybe for the first time.

She raises her eyebrows towards Brooklyn.

BROOKLYN

Ya, no problem. I can't promise we'll make it a habit.

OCTAVIA

Well so long as we don't make coming here late at night with fairy tales a habit I think I'll be fine. Look, I don't want to scare you but the woods aren't a safe place at night. It's probably best you stay at your cabin. Especially since your parent's aren't here. Norton can bring you home.

BROOKLYN

We can bring ourselves home, don't worry.

Octavia folds her arms.

OCTAVIA

Well so long as you're not scared of any monsters.

Samantha looks frightened. Norman grimaces and gestures indicating that Octavia was being too extreme.

15 INT. CABIN - NIGHT

15

SAMANTHA and BROOKLYN, both beyond tired, enter the cabin.

Brooklyn immediately flops down face first onto the couch.

BROOKLYN

Octavia was such an ass to you. I should have done something.

SAMANTHA

It's fine, don't worry about it.

Something catches Sam's eye on the floor.

BROOKLYN

Sure, but she's supposed to help people right. Not tell some kid that they're stupid. Not that you're a kid. Norton probably wouldn't do that. What an idiot.

While Brooklyn talks Sam kneels and picks up a small pin on the floor. She turns it over in her hands. The pin has the image of a cow being sucked into space via a flying saucer on it.

SAMANTHA

Brooklyn?

BROOKLYN

What up.

SAMANTHA

You believe me right?

Brooklyn peeks over the couch.

BROOKLYN

All I know is that picture was creepy as hell. In any case I doubt it was a bear you saw. I don't know, what do you think it was?

Samantha stares at the pin.

16 INT. CABIN - NIGHT

16

SAMANTHA lies in bed, staring out into the black night and still clutching the pin, listening intently for any sound out of the ordinary.

A figure appears behind her.

BROOKLYN

Hey, are you still awake?

SAMANTHA

Yes. Are you thinking about the monster?

BROOKLYN

(trying to sound sympathetic)
Uh, no. But I thought maybe you were.

Brooklyn crawls into bed next to Sam.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)

Why did you leave? Samantha sighs.

SAMANTHA

I just. I just wish it were just us two out here. Every time we're out here I feel alone. You're always hanging out with Natasha.

BROOKLYN

Why don't you like her?

SAMANTHA

She's - she's fine!

BROOKLYN

You could get to know her.

SAMANTHA

Mmm... too sleepy.

BROOKLYN

Please, I don't want her to think that you hate her.

SAMANTHA

I don't, I promise.

They both sit listening to the wind outside the cabin for a few beats.

Brooklyn looks nervously at Samantha then stares at the ceiling mustering up some courage.

BROOKLYN

I'm gay.

Samantha is confused.

SAMANTHA

Obviously. You've told me already.

Brooklyn relaxes.

BROOKLYN

(quietly)

I was pretending you were Mum.

Samantha rolls over and hugs Brooklyn.

17 INT. CABIN - MORNING

17

A pan of eggs is being fried on an old stove.

SAMANTHA is going over an old map on the table.

SAMANTHA

Scale of one to ten. How angry will
Dad be if I draw on this.

BROOKLYN puts some eggs onto a plate.

BROOKLYN

Doesn't matter, do it.

SAMANTHA hesitantly puts a thick red marker to paper and circles where she encountered the monster.

SAMANTHA

I think I need to go back out into the
woods. Explore a little more. Maybe I
can find foot prints or something.

Brooklyn comes over and sits at the table. Sam snatches a piece of bacon and then walks over to a wall with the map.

She begins to pin it to one of the cabin walls.

BROOKLYN

I don't want you getting lost out
there, plus -

She points a fork casually at Sam.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)

I'm free all day. I told Nat we'd hang
out this evening but the day is all
ours.

Samantha looks back from the map and smiles.

SAMANTHA

Promise?

BROOKLYN
Definitely.

Brooklyn continues working on her breakfast when there's a knock at the door.

Samantha rolls her eyes.

Brooklyn looks confused and moves to answer it. Two figures are seen in the window as Brooklyn opens it to reveal RANGER NORTON and OCTAVIA standing looking rather grim.

RANGER NORTON
Morning there kids, smells something wonderful in here.

BROOKLYN
(a bit relieved)
Hi Norton.

RANGER NORTON
Well folks, we're kinda doin a sweep of all the nearby residences and such - just to let you know. We didn't really want to tell you but recent events have sort of forced us to be forthcomin here.

A nervous gulp from Norton.

RANGER NORTON (CONT'D)
It's just that a fella has gone missing. Uh, Jimmy Blackson. Blakeson. Blak-e-son.

Ranger Norton holds up a photo of an bushy bearded lumberjack type.

BROOKLYN
When? Last night?

OCTAVIA
Yes, he was supposed to have a couple friends over for dinner and they said he wasn't there.

Samantha's curiosity is peaked.

SAMANTHA
Does he live here permanently?

Norton offers her the photo.

RANGER NORTON

Not permanent no, just in the summertime.

SAMANTHA

So maybe he went home.

RANGER NORTON

Well uh, ya wait, did we think of that Octavia?

OCTAVIA

His truck was there when his friends arrived. Not that it's any of your business.

RANGER NORTON

Ah yes, there was the truck.

OCTAVIA

His door was unlocked and the lights in his cabin were on.

RANGER NORTON

Lights on, that's a sure sign ya know, power ain't cheap out here.

SAMANTHA

What do you think happened?

RANGER NORTON

Kidnapping maybe. But likely he's just out in the woods, got lost at night.

SAMANTHA

Why would he wander into the woods if he had friends coming over.

RANGER NORTON

Another great question! Wow, we should make you a detective because I, well, I have no idea to be honest.

He trails off.

OCTAVIA

Alright that's probably enough. We aren't trying to scare anyone here. We're just asking that people around

here keep an eye out. And I'd recommend , again maybe just take it easy and don't go searching for any monsters.

Samantha shifts to cover her recently mounted map. Brooklyn doesn't take being ordered around very well.

BROOKLYN

Don't worry about us.

Octavia grows more stern.

OCTAVIA

I'd hate to have to call your parents about this. We're already doing a favour by letting them leave you out here.

Brooklyn does her best to stand her ground.

OCTAVIA (CONT'D)

Make my life and your life a little bit easier and just enjoy the weekend without getting yourself put on a milk carton. Understand?

Samantha nods. Brooklyn frowns. Ranger Norton tries desperately to keep things upbeat.

RANGER NORTON

I think we all understand! It'd be a shame to waste such a nice day, and we don't want to keep you. Remember, we're just a call away if ya need anything!

He tips his hat and closes the door slowly, waving goodbye as he does so.

The door softly CLICKS shut.

BROOKLYN

You know what Sam, I've been thinking.

SAMANTHA

About what?

BROOKLYN

If we went after your monster, real quiet and sneaky like -

She shrugs.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)

Norton and grumpy-pants wouldn't even know we were gone.

Samantha beams and runs to grab her things.

18 EXT. FOREST - DAY

18

SAM and BROOKLYN head through the trees. Sam is carefully retracing her steps.

SAMANTHA

Look for any broken branches. Or even footsteps that look out of the ordinary.

BROOKLYN

How am I supposed to know if they're out of the ordinary?

SAMANTHA

You'll know I think. I believe in you.

Brooklyn scans the ground and kicks the dirt absentmindedly.

SAMANTHA

You don't think Octavia is going to tell mum and dad that you're gay do you?

BROOKLYN

She's definitely an asshole but I don't think she's that much of an asshole. I think it's just best they don't see us wandering around, especially here.

The forest gives way to a dirt road.

SAMANTHA

We're pretty close to where I saw it.

Brooklyn looks around.

BROOKLYN

I think this road leads to a cabin.

SAMANTHA

The tire tracks here look pretty

fresh. I didn't really notice anything, it was too dark out. Can we ask and see if they saw anything?

Brooklyn isn't too sure.

BROOKLYN

Okay, but we aren't staying long. And if it's some weird creepy dude we're getting the hell out of here.

They continue forward along the road.

There's a small signpost hammered into the dirt. It reads "The Blakeson's"

SAMANTHA

Look at this! It's the person who went missing.

Brooklyn grows a bit more cautious but they move past the sign.

Up ahead a reasonably sized cabin sits quietly with a truck parked in front of it loaded with firewood.

SAMANTHA

It does look like he was planning to stay for a while.

They examine the wood in the truck.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

There's something strange I was thinking though. If Mr. Blakeson went missing just the other day wouldn't they wait a bit longer before telling people about it?

BROOKLYN

They're just spooked is all.

SAMANTHA

I saw two eyes in the woods yesterday near here. What if they were flashlights? What if he was kidnapped or something?

BROOKLYN

I don't know. You tell me.

Samantha considers this.

SAMANTHA
No it couldn't have been.

She remembers the PLODDING FOOTSTEPS.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
Something about it doesn't make sense
though.

Samantha moves to the front of the cabin and steps up to
knock on the door.

BROOKLYN
I thought he was missing?

They wait for a moment.

No response.

SAMANTHA
Worth a shot.

Brooklyn walks over and peers through a window into the
cabin.

BROOKLYN
Looks boring.

Samantha sighs.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
Wait, no, look at this.

Samantha squeezes beside Brooklyn and she points inside.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
There's a letter on the table. If
they're kidnappers maybe it's a ransom
note or something?

SAMANTHA
We need to get that.

Brooklyn steps back for a moment and then tries the window.

It's not locked. She looks to Samantha and smiles.

BROOKLYN
Better in there than out here.

Samantha looks hesitantly at the empty cabin.

19 INT. MR. BLAKESON'S CABIN - DAY

19

With every creaky jolt the slowly opening window releases another cloud of dust into the cabin. Not that the cabin itself is dirty it just looks as though this window and the rest of the cabin haven't been upgraded or attended to since it was built.

Brooklyn slips feet-first through the window. Samantha is close behind.

An open envelope and a loosely folded paper sits on the kitchen table.

Brooklyn picks up the note and Samantha comes up behind her and grabs the envelope.

SAMANTHA

There's an address but no return address.

She shows the letter to Natasha.

BROOKLYN

That looks like the right address.

Brooklyn carefully and with great dramatic effect unfolds the paper revealing a symbol inside. It's a multi-armed squid, jet black, with a perfectly circular hole missing from it's center.

She flips over the letter searching for any more information.

There is none.

Only the symbol.

BROOKLYN

What the hell is that supposed to be.

SAMANTHA

I think we should leave.