

Idaho
Ice
Beast



“Jessica, Mom says if you don’t get out of bed right now, you’re not going on the trip!”

Those words were spoken by my little brother, who had opened my bedroom door and was peeking inside.

“Get out of my room, Garrett,” I said from beneath the covers. I had no idea what time it was, but I was tired. Oh, I was excited for the trip and all that, which was the reason I couldn’t get to sleep the night before. Which, of course was the reason I hadn’t gotten out of bed when my alarm

went off. I just hit the snooze button and covered my head with my pillow. I was so tired, and all I wanted was a little more sleep.

But I knew it wasn't going to happen. We were headed for Sun Valley for a ski trip, and I knew I had to get up and get ready. Most of my things were already packed, so I didn't have too much more to do.

And even though I was tired, I really was excited. Every winter, my family travels from our home in Boise, Idaho, to Sun Valley, Idaho, where we stay at a lodge for a week. We ski, snowshoe, snowboard, ride inner tubes down hills . . . it's a week of great fun. I've always loved the winter, and I always look forward to our trip to Sun Valley.

But there's something else about Sun Valley that's always fascinated me:

Bigfoot. The abominable snowman. Yeti. Sasquatch. Or whatever you want to call him. Some people who've seen the creature around Sun Valley call him the ice beast.

Now, before you think I'm totally crazy, you need to know that I don't actually believe in the monster. But many people do, and I like to think that, somewhere in the mountains, maybe a bigfoot creature really does exist. After all, many people have claimed to have seen Bigfoot, and some people have even taken pictures. All of the pictures are either blurry or out of focus, so you never really get a good look at the beast. But it's fun to think about, and I often wondered if such a creature really does exist, hiding in the mountains somewhere.

I had no idea that I was about to get my answer, and I certainly had no idea that our fun vacation was going to turn into such a terrifying experience that would change my life forever.



It took me a while, but I finally dragged myself out of bed and into the kitchen. I was so tired that I forgot to put on my slippers.

“I was just coming to get you,” Mom said. “I thought you were going to sleep forever.”

“I couldn’t get to sleep last night,” I replied with a yawn. “I kept thinking about our trip and how much fun we are going to have, even though I knew I needed to get to sleep. I am so tired.” I yawned again as I covered my mouth with my

hand.

“Well,” Mom said, “maybe you can sleep in the car for a little while. It’s a three-hour drive to Sun Valley, but it will take us a little longer this time because we’re picking up your cousins.”

That got me even more excited. Our cousins live in Mountain Home, which is a city in Idaho, south of Boise. To get to Sun Valley, we have to go through Mountain Home, and this year our cousins would be joining us on our vacation. My favorite cousin is Isaac. He is twelve years old, just like me. In fact, our birthdays are only a couple of weeks apart. He loves to do a lot of the same things that I do, and I knew we would have a great time at the resort in Sun Valley.

I wolfed down a bowl of cereal, got dressed, packed the rest of my things, and was finally ready to go. Dad, Mom, Garrett and I piled into the car, and we were on our way by seven o’clock. Dad insisted that we get started early, so we could get to Sun Valley before noon. That way, he said, we’d have the rest of the day to ski.

I slept all the way to Mountain Home. Garrett brought a book with him, so he kept busy reading and didn't bug me. When we made it to our cousin's house, they were ready to go. Isaac rode with us; the rest of his family followed us in their vehicle, and we drove the rest of the way to the resort at Sun Valley.

It was in the lobby of the resort where I first had an indication that our week-long trip wasn't going to be near as fun as I'd imagined.

Dad was at the front desk, getting checked in. We'd hauled all of our gear inside and placed it on a cart so we wouldn't have to drag any of it up stairs or on an elevator. My mom and my aunt and uncle stood nearby, chatting.

"Hey," Isaac said as he picked up a newspaper from a coffee table by the fireplace. "Check this out!"

He held out the newspaper. On the front was a blurry, black and white photograph that appeared to show some sort of creature hiding among trees, boulders, and snow.

“Is this the Idaho Ice Beast?” I read the headline aloud.

“It looks like some sort of white bigfoot creature,” Isaac said. “It says he was spotted not far from here.”

“It’s not real,” I said. “There’s no such thing.”

Isaac shook his head. “Yes, there is,” he said. “But he stays hidden in the mountains so not many people see him. Wouldn’t it be cool to see him during our vacation?”

“Sure,” I said, “if he was real. But he’s not real, and that picture is a fake.”

I continued staring at the picture. Yes, it looked like some sort of creature was peering out between snow-covered pine trees, but it could have been just a trick of light and shadow, and I didn’t believe for a minute that it was actually some sort of creature.

Yet, something about the picture made me feel uneasy. I didn’t believe it was a real creature, but the more I stared at it, the more anxious I became.

What if there really is some sort of weird creature out there? I thought. What if he hunts people? What if his favorite snack is kids on snowshoes or skis?

I can be that way, sometimes. Sometimes, I allow my imagination run wild, and I get freaked out.

Well, I was going to get freaked out on our vacation, for sure . . . but it would have nothing to do with my imagination.



The rest of the day was a lot of fun. After we loaded everything into our room, we ate lunch with my cousins and my aunt and uncle in the restaurant at the resort. I sat with Isaac, and we talked and laughed the entire time. He really is pretty cool, and I wished he lived closer to our home in Boise, because we only get to see each other a couple of times a year.

After lunch, everyone went skiing except for me and Isaac. I like snowboarding better than

skiing, and so does Isaac, so that's what we did. I'm not very good at it, but it sure is a lot of fun.

And every so often, while sailing down the hill, I would stare off into the woods and think about the creepy picture from the newspaper. That got me thinking about all the other people who claimed so have seen a bigfoot creature, and I started to wonder again.

What if there really is a creature like that, living in the forest? What if he's watching me, right now.

But these thoughts vanished quickly. I had to pay attention to the hill, to what I was doing so I didn't crash into anything or anyone. Still, I fell a bunch of times, but I didn't get hurt. Actually, it was kind of fun.

That night, we had pizza in our room, which was connected to my cousin's room through a door. We all ate together. Isaac, his little sister Sarah, my little brother Garrett, and I watched a movie. It was good, but I had a hard time keeping my eyes open. After all, I'd hardly slept the night

before, and I got sleepy early. I changed into my pajamas and fell asleep on the couch . . . and that's where I was when I woke up some time during the night.

It was dark, and I was confused. There was a window with a curtain drawn, letting in a little light around the edges. It took me a moment to realize where I was.

Oh, yeah, I thought. We're in Sun Valley, on our trip. I must have fallen asleep.

The hotel room had two separate bedrooms; one for Garrett and me, and one for my parents. I didn't want to sleep on the couch for the rest of the night, so I slowly stood and walked across the room. The door to Mom and Dad's room was open a tiny bit, and the door to my room was open all the way. There was a tiny nightlight glowing inside, and I could see the lumpy figure of Garrett sleeping beneath the covers on his bed.

I walked into the room. Like the larger living room, our bedroom also had a window. The curtains were closed, but thin bands of sugary light

seemed to burn around the edges.

I wonder if it's snowing, I thought, and I tiptoed to the window and drew open the curtain.

Outside, several bright lights lit up the snow covered parking area in the distance. We were on the third floor, so I had a good view of the ski hills, as they, too had a few lights positioned up the mountain. The snow was falling lightly, and I was sure we would get a few inches by morning.

I was just about to let go of the curtain and allow the fall back into place, when I saw something move. Something big, in the shadows near the trees.

I stopped and squinted, trying to see better.
Nothing.

I continued watching, trying to see what had moved. I saw something, I was sure, but I didn't know what.

Finally, after not seeing it again, I climbed into bed and fell asleep.

The next morning, I awoke well rested, excited, and ready for the day. I had completely

forgotten about the thing I'd seen moving during the night . . . Until Isaac and I went downstairs for breakfast.

That's when we saw a police car parked out front of the resort beneath the awning, and I knew something horrible had happened.



When Isaac and I saw the uniformed man and woman in the lobby, we stopped.

“Uh-oh,” Isaac whispered. *“Somebody’s in trouble.”*

It was then that I remembered seeing the strange sight outside the hotel room window last night, and I wondered if that had something to do with the police being there.

I knew I saw something, I thought. *There was something out there last night. Something in the*

shadows, near the trees.

“Jessica?” Isaac said. “What’s the matter? You look like you’ve seen a ghost.”

“Not a ghost,” I said. “But I saw something last night. Something in the snow, outside by the woods.”

“What was it?” Isaac asked.

I shrugged. “I’m not really sure,” I replied. “It was late, and it was dark. I saw something move, but I didn’t really get a good look at what it was.”

We started walking again, making our way past the two police officers at the front desk. I wanted to know why they were there, but I didn’t want to be nosy. It really wasn’t any of my business, but I still wondered if it had anything to do with the strange thing I have seen the night before.

Just what did I see? I wondered again. I saw something move, I know that much. But it could’ve been a man, or maybe just a tree branch.

The restaurant was connected to the lobby,

and Isaac and I walked through a set of double doors. It was still a little early, so there weren't many people having breakfast yet. We chose a table that had enough chairs for everyone in my family and Isaac's, and sat.

Isaac turned his head and looked at the police officers.

"Maybe there was a robbery," Isaac said. "Or maybe there's a crazed killer on the loose!"

A woman came over to our table and smiled, filling up our water glasses.

"Can I get you to something for breakfast?" she said.

"Not yet," I said. We were waiting for our families to join us."

"How come the police are here?" Isaac asked her.

The server turned and looked at the two police officers standing by the front desk in the lobby.

"Oh, that," she said. "No big deal. Someone drove their car into another car in the parking lot.

It's slippery out there today. Nobody got hurt, but one of the cars has a big dent. Whenever that happens, they have to file a police report."

That made sense, and I was glad to hear that it had nothing to do with what I'd seen the night before. I was still a little nervous about the picture I'd seen in the paper the day before, but I quickly forgot about Bigfoot monsters when our families joined us for breakfast.

We made plans for the day. Mom, Dad, and my aunt and uncle were going to ski. Garrett and my cousin, Sarah, were enrolled in a ski class, so they would be busy the entire day.

I had planned on snowboarding, but Isaac showed me something else.

"Look at this," he said, and he pulled a folded brochure from his pocket. It was colorful, and as he unfolded it, I could see that it was a trail map.

"These are snowshoe trails," he said. "Let's rent snowshoes and go for a hike through the hills. We might even see that weird Bigfoot creature that

we saw in the newspaper yesterday.”

I rolled my eyes. “Yeah, right,” I said. “But snowshoeing sounds like it would be a lot of fun. Have you ever done it before?”

“ Only once,” Isaac replied. “It’s great, once you get the hang of it. Snowshoes allow you to walk in snow that is really deep. You can even run while wearing them, but it takes some practice.”

“Why would anyone want to run with snowshoes?” I asked.

Isaac shrugged. “Beats me,” he said. “I’m not planning on running with my snowshoes on.”

“Me neither,” I said.

But we were both wrong. Soon, both of us would be running with our snowshoes on . . . but we would be running to save our lives.

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