

A Night in the Woods

Written by Jeff Hammye

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

SEAN HARRINGTON is a young, lanky entrepreneur (25), and prepping for a camping trip this weekend. His apartment is modest.

Quick cuts to belongings in his apartment. There is camping equipment by the door. Sean grabs his keys, and the equipment and exits the apartment.

EXT. ALONG ROAD - LATER

A SILVER SEDAN speeds down a lonely road.

EXT. PARKING LOT OF PARK - MID DAY

Sean exits his sedan, hearing the beep as it locks. An Old Man in his mid-fifties sits on a bench at the mouth to the trail. He sits casually and waits for Sean to approach.

OLD MAN

Afternoon.

SEAN

Uhh, howdy. Are you the Park Ranger or something?

OLD MAN

No, I'm not really much to tell you the truth.

SEAN

Oh, well then if you don't mind I'll be on my way.

OLD MAN

Sure, just don't leave your tent flap open at night.

Sean stops and turns towards the Old Man.

SEAN

And why's that?

OLD MAN

The mosquitoes.

SEAN

What about the mosquitoes?

OLD MAN

They'll nab your pecker!

The Old Man roars in laughter, and cackles.

OLD MAN

Yes, but really keep your tent closed up at night. And I don't mean to sound like some Smokey Bear shit either.

SEAN

What do you mean?

OLD MAN

I ain't ever seen your face round here so I'm gonna give you some slack for not knowing and tell you the long story. These woods, something's up with 'em. Something out of our own understanding. Been feeling it in my knees, and I was just thinking I was getting old. But no, there's something unnatural up here. Ah, maybe I've said too much I don't think you're up to hearin' it.

SEAN

No, may as well and tell me; suns only getting lower.

OLD MAN

Okay, can't say I didn't warn you. But with what I was telling you, we don't really have a name. Sometimes he comes round, and other times not at all. Mostly at night, but I digress; been hearing for years that "He" walks these parts, only at night though if what I hear is correct.

SEAN

Who's "He?"

OLD MAN

Not too sure, could be a man or the Devil himself. It's enough to really scare some people out of there breeches.

SEAN

And no one has thought to come out and stop Him?

OLD MAN

Haven't had much success finding Him, "He's" smarter than you or I. And the one's smart enough don't believe it. I haven't heard of Him hurting nobody,

though I reckon when he sees you ain't nobody is hearing of you again.

SEAN

Yeah whatever, man.

OLD MAN

Believe what you want, something ain't right. And I recommend leaving that tent shut and you staying in it when that sun comes down. Especially if you headin' way deep in those woods.

SEAN

I doubt anything's going to come of it. But thanks for the chat.

OLD MAN

Keep it closed or else you'll see what happens.

SEAN

Or what?

OLD MAN

... "He'll" nab your pecker!

SEAN

Okay, well see ya I guess.

Sean quickly turns to head on the trail. Leaving the Old Man sitting on the bench.

OLD MAN

Oh, the wind it falls across me. How I long to be back at the seaaa. I see the ropes all a swingin', knowing soon they're for me. And the blue bird still sang, while the bells all-a-rang.

EXT. TRAILS IN THE PARK - LATER

The Old Man's voice and laughter slowly die out. The deeper Sean goes, the quieter the forest gets. Some trees are still dead, but most of the fauna has flourished. The sun is slowly setting. The sky growing a deeper red and purple. Sean trips over an exposed root.

SEAN

Ah, ow ow shit. Fuck. Okay, good nobody saw that.

Sean is continuing on the trail again.

SEAN (Continued.)
Aaand you're talking to yourself. Like
a crazy person.

EXT. FURTHER DOWN THE TRAIL - LATER

A river flows lazily and Sean takes a moment to take it all in. Sean goes back on the trail. He still finds it unnerving that there is no other sound as he can hear the wind push through the trees.

There is a rustling behind him. Sean quickly turns.

Silence responds.

SEAN

If it's one of you mosquitoes I've been hearing about forget it! You can't have my pecker. Great I might be going crazy.

EXT FURTHER DOWN THE TRAIL - EVENING

Sean continues down the trail. The shadows are growing longer. He feels like he's being watched. Sean senses a pretty horrible smell, and laying on the ground ahead of him are two dead birds.

SEAN

Okay, now that's just plain creepy.

EXT. CLEARING FOR THE CAMPSITE - LATER

Sean reaches the edge of the clearing, taking in the sights. A bathroom sits across the campsite.

SEAN

All the comforts of home.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE BATHROOM - LATER

Sean opens the entrance to the bathroom. He scans around noticing the very modest interior. A single lit lightbulb sways back and forth. There is a deadbolt from the inside.

SEAN

Alright! Definitely don't want any raccoons peeking on me while I'm on the can.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE BATHROOM - A MOMENT AFTER

Sean closes the door behind him.

EXT. MIDDLE OF THE CLEARING - LATER

Sean is grabbing some firewood. His modest one man tent is all set up. Sean leans down to start it with flint and steel.

SEAN

C'mon, c'mon.

The flint and steel spark ineffectively.

SEAN (Continued.)

Dammit, you little son of a-

Repeatedly strikes the steel.

SEAN (Continued.)

Fuckin hell what does a brother have to do to-?

A good spark, and the kindling ignites.

SEAN (continued)

Light. Yay! Brought to you in part by your local Eagle Scout.

Sean reclines back, resting against a log. The stars are out. Flicks of the fire join them. Sean hears a rustling at the edge of the woods. Sean grows nervous again, but finds his voice.

SEAN

Oh no, not you guys again! I told you all before you can't have my pecker.

The rustling stops, and the symphony of summer settles again. As does Sean.

EXT. THE CAMPSITE - NIGHT

The last embers burn out. SEAN preps to go to bed.

INT. TENT - LATER

Sean lays in his sleeping bag. The shadows of branches stretch across the tent's canvas. The luminous moon shines through.

SEAN

Home, sweet home.

A scratching is heard outside of the tent, but Sean assumes it is a critter. He falls asleep.

INT. TENT - MIDDLE OF NIGHT

A crash is heard outside, pots falling over and a half burnt log rolling. Sean shoots straight up, but freezes. He can hear footsteps outside. Sean slowly edges towards the tent flap. He tries to unzip as slowly and quietly as he can. He looks outside.

A PLAIN LOOKING MAN, almost looking like the OLD MAN, stands silently across Sean's campsite.

Sean falls backwards, and after a few moments looks back out. HE is gone. Sean zips up the flap and grabs his phone.

The bathroom is not too far of a run.

There is a silhouette of a MAN behind the tent, lit by the moon. Sean doesn't notice.

Frantically, Sean sprints out of the tent and races for the bathroom. Something or someone runs quickly behind him.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS AFTER

SEAN quickly slams and locks the door behind him. It's quiet, and SEAN rests against the door. SEAN is breathing heavily.

SEAN

Je-Jesus Christ. I really shouldn't have cancelled that gym membership.

Sean looks up, seeing the light filter from the moon through the only window. A HAND streaks across it, leaving prints.

A KNOCKING is heard on the door behind him. The VOICE sounds inhuman. Almost too lifelike.

HE

Hello?

Sean is startled to hear the voice.

HE

Can you let me in, please?

SEAN

Not a chance, asshole!

HE

Please. It's cold, dark, wet outside.

SEAN

It's plenty cold and dark in here
thanks!

HE

Cold? Dark. Wet.

The voice from HE sounds as if it is getting lower. Pounding on the door.

HE

Let me in. You will die.

Continued pounding on the door.

HE (Continued.)

Let me in.

Sean looks as if he is going to faint. The door is pounded on so hard that dust is falling from the ceiling. Sean's whole world violently shaking. Sean pulls out his phone, and dials a number.

SEAN

C'mon pick up, pick up, pick up.

The phone ringing.

SEAN (Continued.)

Hello? Hi 911. Yeah, it is. I don't know,
I don't know what happened. Are you
serious? I'm trying to be calm right
now. I'm out at. Yes, I'm out at
Shawnee Preserve. Yeah, pretty fucking
deep. I, what? Yeah I was just sleeping
I heard some noises, I locked myself in
a god damn bathroom. I...I don't know
if I knew I'd tell you. Just please,

please send help. Okay, okay thank you.
Thank you. Please hurry.

SEAN hangs up the phone.

HE

Please let me in.

Sean is distraught, shaking. SEAN only hears the pounding on the door, the voice of HE has tuned out. Slowly, the pounding dies down. Then he hears a noise, something on all fours running across the roof.

Sean falls asleep.

INT. BATHROOM AT CAMPSITE - MORNING

Knocking at the door, awakens Sean.

OFFICER RICHARD

Hello? Sir, this is the police. Open up.

SEAN

No, no, no, no. I won't open up.

OFFICER RICHARD

Sir please open up, we're not the boogeyman.

SEAN

Okay, okay. I...just need a moment.

OFFICER GEORGE

Take your time, Sleeping Beauty.

Sean, red eyed and numb, stands up and opens the door. Outside, two POLICE MEN and a cruiser.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF BATHROOM - MORNING

OFFICER RICHARD

We got a call at three in the morning from you, something about a disturbance. Said it was urgent.

SEAN

A bit of an understatement.

OFFICER GEORGE

Woof, the smell is a bit of an understatement too.

OFFICER RICHARD

Are you doing okay? Do you need us to call anyone?

SEAN

No, no I'm fine I just need a moment.

OFFICER GEORGE

When you can, come with us for a moment we need to show you the damages.

EXT. CAMPSITE - LATER

Sean follows the two policemen to his campsite. The tent is reduced to tatters, pots and other equipment are strewn about. The grass is torn up around the campfire.

OFFICER RICHARD

Do you know who did this? Anything that can help us catch the son of a gun?

SEAN

I...I don't know. I don't even know what I saw.

OFFICER GEORGE

Well we can't put charges on a ghost, sir with all due respect. Here, c'mon we'll look into it.

INT. POLICE SQUAD CAR - LATER

Sean is sitting in the back of the squad car, looking out at the passing forests. The fresh morning dew hanging lazily from leaves.

OFFICER RICHARD

You know earlier we were outside that bathroom for like an hour knocking on that door.

OFFICER GEORGE

Yeah if we'd have known you were gonna sleep that long then we would've gone out and grabbed a coffee.

OFFICER RICHARD

Still can, George.

OFFICER GEORGE

Too right Rich, we're on the clock too.

OFFICER RICHARD

I guess while we're all here, hey uhh, its SEAN isn't it? Want to grab a coffee with OFFICER GEORGE and me?

SEAN

No, no thanks I'm fine.

OFFICER GEORGE

Suit yourself.

OFFICER RICHARD

Hey, SEAN, you know how OFFICER GEORGE likes his coffee?

Sean shakes his head no.

OFFICER RICHARD

Lots of cream, lots of sugar.

GEORGE

You know me so well.

OFFICER RICHARD

Hey man, I personally prefer black coffee, puts hair on your chest!

OFFICER GEORGE

And you know what they say about black coffee drinkers..

OFFICER RICHARD

Fuck you.

THE THREE ride silence for a bit, passing more trees. Coming closer to the entrance.

OFFICER RICHARD

Say, Sean. What were you doing way out there to begin with?

SEAN

I was taking a weekend off, figured I get away.

OFFICER GEORGE

I bet last night didn't help any.

SEAN

Nope.

EXT. BENCH BESIDES THE ENTRANCE - DAY

The Old Man sits at the bench when the company of a YOUNG COUPLE joins them.

OLD MAN

..But if you want to know something.
It'd be wise if you didn't leave your tent open at night.

HAROLD

Yeah, and why's that?

OLD MAN

The mosquitoes

JUDE

Stop it, this is too funny. Harold come on.

HAROLD

Hang on just a sec, JUDE. What about the mosquitoes?

OLD MAN

They'll nab your pecker!

The Old Man roars with laughter, as Harold gives a look to Jude and laughs as well. The two officers and Sean exit the vehicle.

OFFICER GEORGE

Hey sorry guys, were you planning on camping out here?

JUDE

Why, yes we were! It's going to feel great to finally get away, right HAROLD? Are you the neighbors?

OFFICER RICHARD

No ma'am. We just advise you don't, or at least don't go too far in.

JUDE

I understand the concern, but where's the adventure then?

OFFICER RICHARD

We've just gotten reports of some strange activity. Can't really say what it is but for your safety it would just be best.

JUDE

We'll be fine. We appreciate the heads up, c'mon HAROLD. It was nice chatting with you!

OLD MAN

Enjoy your night.

Both Harold and Jude walk past Sean. Sean is quickly pacing past the Old Man to get to his car.

EXT. MOUTH OF THE WOODS, ON THE TRAIL - DAY

Harold and Jude are heading to their campsite.

HAROLD

Wonder what was wrong with that poor young man.

JUDE

Yes, acting like he's seen some monster!

Dabs her eyebrow with a cloth.

JUDE (Continued.)

I swear it is so damned hot out here.

HAROLD

Well it is the middle of summer.

JUDE

Oh, shut up.

A rustling is heard in the bushes behind Harold and Jude. They quickly turn around. It is quiet, Jude clings to Harold for a moment.

Both Harold and Jude continue merrily down the trail.

EXT. BENCH BESIDE THE ENTRANCE - SAME TIME

The Old Man is no longer seated on the bench. Nowhere to be seen. Leaves blow idly past.

FADE OUT:

END.