

The Cold Invasion

by
A Fellow Human

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FADE IN:

EXT. FROZEN LAKE - DAY

The sun glints across a vast expanse of ice and snow.

SUPER: Somewhere in the Canadian north

A deer carcass lies in the open, surrounded by bloody snow and many wolf prints.

BETH (35), deer skin boots and pants, rabbit fur mitts and hat, parka and rough-hewn bow, carves off strips of frozen meat with a hacksaw, nervously looking around for any sign of wolves.

BETH (V.O.)

I've lost track of how long it's been. The date doesn't much matter any more. Even the months mean little. It's all just winter now.

She wraps the strips tightly in a plastic bag and sets the package inside a bulky backpack. She notches an arrow with a crudely made arrowhead and retraces her footprints back to shore.

EXT. WOODED RIDGE - NIGHT

Deer meat sizzles on a flat rock next to a campfire, a pot of boiling water next to it. Beth removes the pot and sets it on the snow to cool.

Below her, in the moonlight, the lake stretches towards distant hills.

BETH (V.O.)

When the power was snuffed out, I lost everything. All that was left was to survive the deep freeze. Whatever the aliens did to the atmosphere was turning the planet into a giant snowball.

She uses the hacksaw on a big tree limb, breaking it down for more firewood.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Beth trudges along the snow-covered road. A logging truck sits on the shoulder, driver door open, covered in snow. She approaches cautiously, bow ready.

BETH (V.O.)
I came north, where people had
been surviving the cold forever.
And for a long time that's what I
did. Survive.

She climbs up into the cab.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK CAB - DAY

Beth rummages through the glove box, tossing aside envelopes, receipts, traffic tickets. She pulls out a chocolate bar, overjoyed at her luck.

She unwraps it quickly. The chocolate has begun to turn white. She takes a bite and savors it like the most decadent treat.

BETH (V.O.)
I expected to find others here.

EXT. LOGGING TRUCK CAB - LATER

Beth hops down and starts walking. She stops suddenly.

A LOGGER sits by the side of the road, frozen solid.

BETH (V.O.)
But all I found were bodies.

Beth hesitates a moment before searching through his stiff clothes. She finds a small wad of cash.

INT. HUNTERS CABIN - NIGHT

Beth lights a fire in the hearth, using the cash as tinder. The light grows as she feeds the small flame.

A table lamp flickers faintly, casting eerie shadows. The lamp's cord is wrapped around it, connected to nothing.

BETH (V.O.)
The auroras are even more intense
up here. You get used to it.

EXT. WOODED RIDGE - NIGHT

The strange aurora turns the landscape green and purple. Lights flicker on the road.

Three black shapes slink between them.

BETH (V.O.)
You can even use them.

Beth looks through a spotting scope.

THROUGH SCOPE: The creatures lope low to the ground on long, sinewy limbs. Bulbous heads with stubby tentacled mouths search the night as they move.

Beth makes a notation in a notebook with charcoal.

BETH (V.O.)
The aliens don't like the lights.
It attracts them like moths. It
makes them nervous.

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER RUINS - MORNING

Beth trudges through the snow as she passes a burned down truck-stop diner. A nearby growl stops her. Another growl, from the parking lot around the corner of the building. She moves slowly, carefully.

Three wolves surround a car. One digs at the snow burying it. Another stands on the hood and growls at the windshield. Something moves inside.

Beth drops her pack. The sound startles the wolves. They see her and charge.

She readies her bow. An arrow whistles through the air, striking one in the ribs. It falls instantly.

Beth notches another arrow as the other two wolves close rapidly. She lets it fly, hitting a wolf in the sternum. It collapses in a heap.

The third wolf is almost on her. She drops the bow and swings the hacksaw as it leaps. It bites into the wolf's neck and the wolf yelps and scampers away.

Beth picks wolf fur out of the saw blade as she walks towards the car.

BETH (V.O.)

If you stay alone long enough, it starts to feel normal. Like that's how it's supposed to be. You forget what it's like to have other people around.

The door opens and MICHAEL (30) steps out.

MICHAEL

You're the first person I've seen in...weeks, I guess.

Beth stares uncertainly.

MICHAEL

I, uh...thanks. For getting them off me. I didn't see them until it was too late. Would have been a goner but for this car. Damn lucky it wasn't locked. I made it just in the nick of time.

He holds out his hand.

MICHAEL

I'm Michael.

Beth slowly takes his hand. They shake, but don't let go. Beth and Michael look each other over, every detail, as if they'd never seen another person before. The emotion is almost too much for both of them.

Finally, Beth lets go of his hand.

BETH

Beth. My name's Beth.

BETH (V.O.)

You could almost forget your own name if there's nobody to use it.

Michael smiles. Beth smiles back.

BETH (V.O.)

I didn't realize how lonely I'd felt until I met Michael.

The smile turns to horror as a black sinewy shape races across the snow. It launches itself at Michael from behind the car. A tentacled maw envelops his head as it plows him to the ground.

Beth screams. She attacks the alien with the hacksaw. Black ichor spills from its wounds as it shrieks. It tries to flee but she hacks at it over and over until the blade snaps. It doesn't move again.

She returns to Michael's lifeless body. The top of his head is gone, his brainpan empty.

Beth holds his hand as snow begins to fall.

EXT. FROZEN WATERFALL - DAY

Beth looks at a crude map written in charcoal. Her finger taps on a scribble that resembles a waterfall.

BETH (V.O.)
He'd come from the northeast, and
he'd seen people. Recently.

Beth checks the position of the sun using a wrist watch. She winds it and stashes it away.

BETH (V.O.)
I came up here to survive, but
that isn't enough any more.

Beth marches on, leaving the waterfall behind.

INT. HUNTERS CABIN - DAY

A note, written in charcoal, sits with a corner tucked under the lamp.

BETH (V.O.)
This is a good place, but it isn't
a home. I don't know if I'll find
anyone, but if you come, maybe
you'll find me. It beats just
surviving.
(beat)
Your fellow human, Beth.

FADE OUT.