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Science Fiction & Fantasy
Flash Fiction

The Drifter

I awaken from laying in a fetal position; my feet numb from the cold. My eyes open to a clear sky of beautiful shiny stars and a full moon. I hear voices of people laughing and talking. I stand to my feet looking around, trying to make sense of my surroundings. “I shouldn’t be here,” I thought; but these woods feel familiar as if I’ve been here before. The sound of laughter ignites my suspicion. I feel more comfortable in my own skin as I roam the woods following endless chatter.

A thick darkness gravitates the woods. I perceive fifty feet ahead; everything is transparent as if I’m wearing night vision infrareds. Instantly my reception of noise is lucid. As chatter echoes louder throughout the woods. I follow the stench of burning wood from a soft breeze. A flickering of light catches my eye. A gathering around the bonfire, the voices sounds familiar; but the faces are somewhat of a blur. I stand afar observing their every move. Saliva drips from my mouth from an urgent uncontrollable craving I’ve been avoiding. I have no human control of my thirst. I glance at the lit full moon. Suddenly, I realize, I have lost all self-control.

“Ayden,” Beth yells! “Hurry up, you’re going to be late for school.”

After a few minutes, Ayden finally come down stairs and sit at the kitchen table.

“ Did you sleep good last night, you look a little tired,” Beth asks?

“ No, not really,” respond Ayden.

Beth, “ Eat your breakfast before it gets cold. I’m

already running late, I will see you this afternoon, sweetheart.

“Okay, Mom,” said Ayden. One will think Ayden is just like any other ordinary high school student. He is more like the baseball cap, old T-shirt, faded jeans skateboard type of guy and quite popular amongst the girls especially in a small town like Abbeville, Louisiana, population 11,887. The folks in this small town take pride in their Cajun heritage. It’s an area where the community sticks together by making faith, family and friends their top priority. Ayden is the only child of Peter and Beth Drew. Peter is a planetology and Beth is a geologist. They both fell in love forty years ago during a top-secret project for the government.

Steve, one of Ayden friends since childhood, invited him and some more guys to spend the weekend up at Lake Cortial. All four guys jumped in Steve’s black trial blazer and headed out towards the lake.

“Guys, you all know this lake is haunted right,” Steve asks?

“Yeah right, that’s a good one. I don’t believe that crap,” said Carlos.

“Me neither,” Jason added.

“Rather you guys believe it or not, it just might be some truth about the old tales,” suggest Steve.

“Bro, will you please shut up and drive. “You’re spooking me out and we’re not even there yet,” replied Jason.

“Well I’m curious, tell us the story about Lake Cortial,” Ayden Ask?

“Rumor has it, there is eyewitness accounts about shape-drifters, who are these alien demons that can take on the form of other humans and animals. They have glowing red eyes, and they can listen to your thoughts and read your mind. While you’re asleep at night in your tent, they will come and suck the spirit right out of your body,” said Steve.

“No way man,” Carlos said. “ As a kid, I remember my grandfather telling us stories about how people will just disappear after swimming in the lake,” add Jason.

“That’s it, I have heard enough, lets go, get high, eat, drink

beer, and have fun,” said Jason.

“I second that,” said Carlos.

That night while camping on the lake, they all sat around the bonfire, eating, drinking, and smoking. All three decided to go skinny-dipping into the lake. They all jumped in the lake one by one except for Ayden.

“Ayden you puss,” yelled Steve. “Come on, party pooper, jump into the lake.”

“No, you guys go ahead,” yelled Ayden! “Besides, I’m tired, I think I’m going to call it a night.”

“Suit yourself,” yells Carlos! “It’s past your bed time anyway, puss.”

All three guys laughs, Ayden didn’t care; he was too tired to even respond. He found a nice cozy spot in his tent to lay his head; he relaxes and dozes off. The rest of the guys stayed in the lake swimming and horse playing around. After a couple hours the three of them decide to get out of the lake, dry off, and finish up their beer drinking by the fire. By then Ayden has fallen into a deep sleep. Even as a child Ayden had recurring dreams of him nude running through this thick forest at night. He knew someone or something sinister and inhuman was chasing him, but he could never look back to see who, or what it was.

“Shh!” said Steve. “Do you guys hear that?”

“No! Hear what,” Carlos said. “The only sounds I hear is Ayden snoring like a pig.”

“Shh! Keep your voice down,” Steve said. “Listen, it sounds like growling.”

“Man, you need to stop smoking on that hash,” laughed Jason.

“Yeah, man,” Carlos, said. “ Because it’s got you paranoid as hell.”

All three boys laugh.

That night Ayden fell into a deep sleep, dreaming he was roaming the woods once again as if he was looking, searching, for something or someone. He stops, he hears voices, and he sniffs the

stench in the air, he follows it. Fifty feet ahead, he sees the light from the fire. He pauses to observe premises. He waits like a lion in search of its prey, but this time he is not the prey, but the hunter.