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Life Has a Board for Every Behind

J. Alicia Shank

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LIFE HAS A BOARD FOR EVERY BEHIND

IN CANADA, THEY CALL IT Sasquatch. Clarence preferred to refer to it by the scientific name of the prehistoric creature he believed it to be descended from: *Gigantopithecus*.

"Come now, Clarence," the other biologists in his department said whenever he used the term. "Latin nomenclature doesn't lend legitimacy to your studies. That line died out in the Pleistocene." At least they were good-natured about it—they'd tease him with copies of lurid tabloids, their headlines endless variations on the "I Had Bigfoot's Baby" theme. They'd even bought an enormous autographed hightop from one of the school's basketball players at a charity auction and placed it on Clarence's desk, snickering as they rushed away. But they didn't persecute him, because this was Wyoming, after all, and quiet people were allowed their space. Clarence felt isolated among them, but that was nothing new. He'd spent his whole life as the answer to the question: Which of these things is not like the others?

"If there can be a black biology professor in Wyoming, there can be a Yeti in the woods," his brother Henry said when Clarence told him about the antics of the other scientists. "You're the mystery creature, if you ask me."

Clarence had phoned his brother because he was upset about a conversation he'd had with his mother earlier in the day. Someone had sent her an unflattering profile of him in *American Skeptic*, and she'd called to ask about it. "All I could think to say was, 'You have a friend who subscribes to *American Skeptic*?'"

"It must be those crazy old ladies she meets up with at bingo," Henry said. "Did it have a nice picture of you, at least?"

"It had a caricature of me, with a shrunken head and enormous feet." Clarence felt himself shaking with rage. "I am sick of this sort of thing!"

“Clarence, tell me this,” Henry said. “Look in your living room. Do you have a ghetto TV stand?”

“What’s that?”

“A little TV sitting on top a big old TV that hasn’t worked in years?”

“No.”

“Then you’re doing all right.”

Henry was the only person Clarence spoke with about these things. There was a small cadre of legitimate believers who sent each other Christmas cards and collaborated occasionally—an anthropologist in Idaho, a forensic investigator in Texas—but they rarely met. Clarence distanced himself from the self-professed cryptozoologists who believed in everything: Nessie, aliens, that the Cubs would rise again. Every once in a while one of these nuts would show up at Clarence’s doorstep in a Bigfoot Investigation Society t-shirt and hound him for comments to print on their obsessive websites. Clarence always asked them to leave. He only worked with respectable experts, so that he had some hope of preserving what was left of his reputation.

“Listen,” Henry said, “I’ll talk to Mom, smooth her feathers. I’ll be up to see you in a week anyway. I’ll catch that monkey for you, or better yet, we’ll shoot it.”

“I’m not going to shoot a bigfoot,” Clarence said.

“You’ve said that no one will believe you until you produce a body, right? We’ll get one and you’ll be famous, and we’ll forget about all this.”

Henry brought his family up from Gary, Indiana to visit Clarence almost every July during Frontier Days in Cheyenne. Henry was a successful car salesman with a seal-the-deal grin and a trim moustache. His chubby cheeks gave him a look of constant good humor, as if he were always chuckling to himself. He dressed impeccably, in monochromatic ensembles that complemented the coffee-and-cream color of his skin. Henry put people at ease, dropped the ‘g’s off his gerunds in a companionable way.

Clarence’s skin was darker, a roasted chestnut brown. He wouldn’t laugh at a dumb joke that wasn’t funny just so its

teller wouldn't feel stupid and he didn't want to be made into a sideshow. His face was leaner than Henry's and his eyes were heavy-lidded, large and reflective looking, but they often betrayed his most frequent thought, that most people were idiots. He had such a serious, sane look about him that some scientists gave him more of a chance than they would have given others when he spoke about bigfoot. His face betrayed a chip-on-the-shoulder attitude and a sorrow in his blood. He looked as though his mind was always on a sour note, but that was no more than this: he was a professional and he wanted to be treated like one.

The other kids in the neighborhood had been nicknamed—Mookie and Peanut and Chumley. But not Clarence. He was a serious child and back then he was respected as such. For Christmas one year, their mother gave Henry a set of Matchbox cars and Clarence a microscope. Henry broke his cars in days, but Clarence cherished the microscope and as he looked through it, his wonder grew.

As a boy, Clarence studied, and as he did the world receded to the wings. The grating laughter of television sitcoms, the rise and fall of his mother's voice as she talked to her sisters on the telephone, the frying and washing and chopping sounds of dinner preparations, the sirens screaming past outside, the children and drunks yelling in the street, all these distractions grew quiet when Clarence was at study. His teachers did not assign enough work to quell him, and so late into the night he read books from the library, books his teacher loaned him, books he'd saved his money for and ordered through the mail.

No one seemed to understand him, not his brother or the kids at school. They thought his hobbies boring and his personality dull. They taunted him, called him "school boy," but Clarence was no fun to tease. It was like teasing a lump of dough, that's how impassive he was. Clarence's mother didn't understand his enthusiasms but knew that what he was doing was important, so she guarded his serenity for him. She guarded it with the wooden spaghetti-sauce-stained spoon that she brandished at Henry to get him to lower the television

volume, and she guarded it with her own body, which she displaced from her bedroom so that Clarence would have a space of his own to study in, free of kitchen clutter or family room noise. Most nights she fell asleep on the old peagreen couch, her nose pointed toward the cushion, clutching her thin housecoat to her for warmth while Clarence studied on.

To reward her Clarence brought home every bit of evidence that showed how sleek his mind was becoming—each report card, certificate, commendation and award, he rendered up to his mother. Clarence was her proudest achievement. Yellowed curling newspaper clippings of the science awards he'd won were still tacked to her humming refrigerator in Gary. She fingered them from time to time, trying to get them to lie flat. The only new clipping she'd received in years was the insulting piece from *American Skeptic*, and it was the first article about her son that she'd thrown away. It didn't match her collection.

It was for his mother, and for his mother only, that Clarence ever felt ashamed about his passion for tracking bigfoot. For her sake, he felt, he should have worked on a cure for cancer, perfected a surgeon's touch, discovered a star and named it for her, done any one of the many grand things that science allows one to do. Instead he chased a myth that left behind tantalizing but shadowy evidence, he sought an invisible creature who revealed himself only briefly and only to a few. He kept his mother's picture on his desk in his laboratory, and more than once when he glanced at it, he felt a pang and thought of hurling all the plaster casts of bigfoot prints out the window and taking up a more sensible pursuit. But his mother did not exert the pull on him she once did—he had escaped her orbit. And nothing could be more unlike his mother in every way than Wyoming. She was a thick-waisted queen of small spaces. In Wyoming there was too much space and not enough to fill it.

In Laramie the wind howled like a beast that wanted to make his presence known. When he first moved to Wyoming, Clarence would bolt upright in the middle of the night, thinking he heard screaming. The windows rattled and the

wind hollered, but eventually Clarence grew to enjoy this relief from the silence of his life. He looked forward to his brother's visits—it was the one week a year when Clarence put aside his maps of bigfoot sightings and alleged Sasquatch hair samples and didn't think about them at all. That's why he was disturbed when Henry kept insisting during the weeks leading up to the visit that they go rustle up a bigfoot.

"It'll be great! Lila will take the kids to see the ponies and the calf-roping and the mutton-busting, and you and I will go catch that monkey."

Clarence wondered if his mother had put Henry up to this. He could imagine her mulling the situation and deciding she had absolute faith in Clarence's mental capacities and scientific wherewithal, but none in his social skills. And wasn't tracking a bipedal primate, presumably a close relative of man, a social occasion? Maybe his mother thought Henry could charm bigfoot out. His mother wouldn't be happy until he became the Jane Goodall of the bigfoot, living among them and accepted as their own, with full-color magazine photo spreads to prove it.

Clarence knew this bigfoot hunt would work out no better than when Henry used to try to fix him up with girls. The girls would agree to come just to be around Henry, but Clarence made them feel a bit sad, older and more serious than it was right to feel at sixteen. They would go out for dinner and the two girls would squeeze in on either side of Henry, leaving Clarence on the other bench, looking down as he drank his Coke through a straw. Clarence was rather more handsome than Henry, but nobody noticed this. The only girl who could get Clarence to talk, or even bothered to try, was Lila, the one Henry married.

At several points in his life, Clarence wondered whether he was even capable of having a good time. He only felt comfortable alone among his books. School was a natural fit, so he stayed in college for ten years. As he went farther in his studies, other black people in his classes went from rare to nonexistent, or even mythical. His professors would notice the way he lingered always on the lonely edges of things and offer

him encouragement. "Several years ago I had a student whom you remind me of, named Tyrone." Here they would shoot him a knowing look to indicate they were referring to another black person. "He went on to become a top researcher at the National Institutes of Health." The lack of other brown faces was something Clarence would only notice on the first day each year, and then he would forget about it, because that was the way it always was.

Henry hadn't always been so supportive of Clarence's career choice. He'd thought it was foolish of Clarence to become a research scientist instead of going into medicine in the first place. "If it don't make dollars, it don't make sense," Henry would say, shaking his head. But students of certain disciplines were expected to be hermits, to have difficulty in social situations. It was a surprise when one wasn't awkward, in fact. So Clarence chose to become a primate biologist, and for the most part, people left him alone. Much had been made of Clarence when it was time for him to find a job. His research was promising, he'd already published a few papers, and besides, every school wanted a black professor to feature prominently in their college brochures. Clarence had already made the covers of several pamphlets as an undergraduate. To the astonishment of the representatives from better-respected programs that tried to woo him, Clarence chose Wyoming. He wanted to live near the forest, in a quiet place with a blue sky, and that is what he did. He moved into a little cabin east of Laramie near the Medicine Bows.

Clarence headed to Laramie intent on studying the functional anatomy of primates. But for the first time in his life, Wyoming offered Clarence a loneliness he couldn't shake. He had always had a few friends before, nerdish fellows who'd been in on the internet when it featured little more than a homepage with Al Gore's face on it, but here he had not even one. He amassed huge long distance bills on calls to Gary when a latent desire to communicate with other human beings emerged. He noticed that one professor in his department, Joseph Metcalf, seemed to be on the outskirts of it, and Clarence decided to approach him. Metcalf sat alone at faculty

parties, if he went at all, and no one ever offered him even a civil "hello" when they passed him in the hallways. Professor Metcalf was a wiry old man, the subject of some campus ridicule because he wore a white lab coat at all times. At Clarence's welcoming party, he decided to strike up a conversation with Metcalf. As soon as Clarence approached, Metcalf became defensive. "I'm afraid I'm not popular around here," he declared. "If you want to maintain your reputation, you'd better go sit with the botanists."

Clarence was unfazed. "What is it that you study? Cold fusion?"

"I'm afraid not," Metcalf replied. "I study bigfoot. If you want to leave me now and get some punch, just do so. There is no need to say that it was nice to meet me."

"Bigfoot?" Clarence said. "Do you mean you study the bigfoot myth, gathering local stories and folklore and that sort of thing?"

"No, I'm after flesh and blood bigfoot. They exist, you know, and I have everything but a carcass to prove it."

So he was a tenured nut—that was why everyone shunned him. But Clarence was intrigued. He wanted to see if there was any evidence that had sent the old man down the path of this folly. Maybe he could even examine some footprint casts and prove them hoaxes with his knowledge of primate locomotion. But though Metcalf grew to trust Clarence and frequently invited him to come over and barbecue some meat with him, Metcalf wouldn't share anything until a few days before he officially retired.

Professor Metcalf's retirement party was a sad little event held in the faculty lounge. The secretary of the science department wanted to order a cake with a science motif in the icing, but all the grocery store offered was a depiction of a mad professor, lifting test tubes bubbling over with insidious potions. "No offense," she said when she presented it to Metcalf. "It was all they had." A few members of the department put in an appearance, and Metcalf and Clarence split a bottle of cheap champagne.

“Come on, Joe,” Clarence urged. “Let me see that bigfoot evidence of yours.”

Metcalf turned on him with a wintry blue-eyed gaze, like something out of Poe, and nodded once.

Metcalf led him to his office. “Well, you’ve badgered me enough, Clarence. Are you sure you want to see this?” he asked, hesitating before opening the first drawer of casts. “I know you Clarence. You’re a scientist, a true scientist, and once you see what’s in these drawers, you will never be able to turn your back on the evidence. You will never stop searching until the riddle is solved. And this will cost you, now and forever. People won’t befriend you. They’ll laugh at your research, they’ll isolate and mock you.”

“Show me what you have to show.”

As Clarence examined the casts, Metcalf told him about the history of bigfoot sightings. First there were the ancient masks of ape faces that northwestern Native Americans had carved before contact with Asians or Latin Americans, or any society to which primates were known. Hikers, campers, geologists, motorists and forest rangers in the Rockies and the Pacific Northwest had been reporting sightings for hundreds of years. And there was Metcalf’s collection of plaster footprint and knuckle impressions—they had been examined by a fingerprint expert from Texas who maintained the largest collection of primate prints in the world, and he had declared that the prints were consistent within themselves and did not match those of any known animal. A team of researchers who had tried to lure out a bigfoot by playing tapes of alleged bigfoot calls and setting out bait fruit in the Cascades had captured the imprint of a furry arm, leg and rump in the mud. Analysis of the hair samples collected at this site showed them to contain DNA of an unknown primate. “Why would anyone go to this trouble to fake something?” Metcalf asked. “Several of the casts show scars where the skin puckers inward around it, as scars in humans and primates do. How would your average hoaxer know how to do this? Sometimes people do send me hoaxes,

or misidentified bear prints, but more than a hundred of these casts cannot be written off as either of those things."

"Many of the casts seem to show a midtarsal hinge," Clarence said, noting a ridge between the forefoot and the heel.

"Exactly. Perfect to allow flexibility for running on steep and uneven terrain."

"But why hasn't a carcass been found? Why haven't any bones been gathered?"

"The million dollar question," Metcalf reflected. "Bodies decompose quickly in the woods, and the truth is no one's looking for a bigfoot carcass. I spend most of my summers camping here and there and I've never even come across the remains of a bear. I believe the bigfoot to be a rare species, with a population of approximately 3000 at most. How many hikers, when they see a decomposing animal, think to investigate it and have it analyzed?"

"Have you ever seen a bigfoot?"

"No. Years of searching and not one. Probably because the bigfoot know I am hunting them."

"You hunt them?"

"Look at all this evidence," Metcalf said, opening his arms wide. "No one believes it, and they won't until I drag a carcass down from the hills."

Clarence didn't know what to think. He was overwhelmed by the amount of data Metcalf had collected. Clarence hadn't realized there was so much carefully documented evidence that suggested an unknown primate living in American woods. But he didn't know what to make of it all, so he put it out of his head.

A few weeks later, Clarence read of Metcalf's death in the *Tribune-Eagle*. Metcalf had been out camping in the mountains west of Cody in the Shoshone National Forest—prime bigfoot spotting territory, from what he had told Clarence—and his body had been discovered by some hikers. Coroners ruled that his death was due to a heart attack. A few days later, the science department secretary approached Clarence and handed him a key. "Professor Metcalf hadn't

cleaned out his lab yet," she explained. "And it appears he's willed everything in it to you."

"How could that be?" Clarence asked.

"Oh, I know you probably don't want any of his stuff, but at least go look through it, before I get someone in there to throw it all away."

Clarence entered the lab and sighed. But he didn't throw any of it away. He found a place to store it, and took some of it to his own lab, where he pondered it from time to time when he wasn't busy with his other research or grading exams. He took some of the bigfoot casts home with him and placed them on his mantel. His days began to feel less lonesome after he began pursuing bigfoot. He would hurry home from campus, fix dinner, and spend his evenings studying records of sightings. So much of the evidence seemed unshakable, and the potential for discovering a new species thrilled him. But it wasn't for several years, after Clarence had earned tenure, that anyone found out about his hobby. He wrote a paper summarizing the evidence of the existence of an unknown North American primate that Metcalf and others had gathered, and submitted it to several journals, where the editors promptly took the trouble of scrawling rude notes for Clarence instead of using form rejection slips. The more people refused to even look at the evidence, the more Clarence began to believe in it. Soon the faculty got wind of Clarence's paper—evidently the journal editors had been ridiculing him with their colleagues across the country. Clarence realized that unless a new publication called *Unpopular Science* suddenly emerged, no legitimate journals would touch his research.

Clarence's studies began to vex him as they never had before. His mother could sense the weariness in his voice, and so coaxed him into telling her the whole story. Clarence went on about the evidence and other scientists' unwillingness to consider his findings at some length. His mother didn't say anything for a moment, then said, "Well, like I always say, life has a board for every behind. Maybe this is yours. But that means it's got one for bigfoot and those other scientists too, acting all high and mighty." She didn't protest Clarence's belief

in bigfoot even for a moment. If he believed in it, she believed in it, and this gave Clarence courage. But that had been years ago, and still no evidence that would convince the doubters had turned up. He saw it in his dreams, the hirsute forest giant, his loose-limbed stride, arms swinging in fluid tandem with his legs like a cross-country skier in the back woods. The week before Henry's visit, Clarence found an unsigned letter slipped under his office door: "Your reputation is your career. Back off."

Henry and his family arrived one afternoon, hot and tired from their drive. "That took forever," Henry's twelve-year-old son Jeffrey said. "My whole neck is one big crink. Why can't we take a plane some time?"

"It's better to drive," Henry said, "you need to see America."

"I don't know that I-80 is America," Lila said. "Your father is a car salesman. He loves cars, and that's why we drive."

Keisha emerged, sleepy-eyed from the car, her clackety beaded braids announcing her presence. "Hey Uncle Clarence, you caught that monkey yet?" It was the children's standard greeting for their uncle.

Coming from them, he didn't mind. He shook his head and smiled while Lila told Keisha to hush. Clarence hustled over to help them unload their bags. "What's this for?" Clarence asked, lifting out a rifle. He hadn't believed that Henry was serious about going after a bigfoot. "You know it's not hunting season around here."

"Are you going to shoot a pony?" Keisha asked, her voice wavering and her face assuming a dramatic expression. She was six years old and suffered from a full-blown case of Misty of Chincoteague Syndrome.

"Nobody's shooting ponies," Henry said. "Jeffrey, what you been telling your sister?" But Jeffrey already took off running.

"It's for the bigfoot," Henry whispered.

"I told you I would not assassinate a bigfoot," Clarence whispered back, testy. "I've tracked bigfoot for years and I've never even seen one. I'm certainly not going to blow away the first one I come across."

"Listen, you've said over and over that other scientists won't believe you until you drag a bigfoot's dead body over to their houses."

Lila cut them off. "I'm starving. You two quit plotting and help me make some lunch."

They ate sandwiches on Clarence's porch, which was shaded by overhanging blue spruce branches and nestled up to a grove of trees that were always full of birdsong. Clarence's house had a woodsy smell, like wet pine needles in forest shadow. It was cool and pleasant for his relatives to get away from Gary with its summer heat, humidity, and depressing northern Indiana haze. Clarence kept a hummingbird feeder near his window, and the children were pleased to see the whirring jewel-toned birds hover and drink. Little chattering animals approached at all hours, begging and unafraid.

"You've got like a whole Snow White set up here," Jeffrey observed.

"Uncle Clarence, why don't you have a wife?" Keisha asked.

"That's because he's a role model, just like dad always says," Jeffrey explained. "He's one smart dude not to get mixed up with any females."

"That's not what I meant," Henry said.

"Uncle Clarence doesn't have a wife because she'd have to go all the way to Denver before she'd find somebody who knew what to do with her hair," Lila said, patting Clarence on the knee. She worried for him, and tried to set him up with her friends whenever he visited Indiana.

Clarence decided to change the subject. "So what are the plans for this week? Frontier Days start tomorrow."

"We're going to see the ponies," Keisha said.

"I figured you and I could go off to do some camping," Henry said with a wink, "And Lila and the kids could hang out at the rodeo."

The matter was soon settled. Lila would find out if there was any way to register Keisha for the mutton busting competition, in which small, helmeted children clung to the back of spirited sheep for as long as they could and then were rewarded with enormous trophies. Jeffrey wanted to catch all of the bull riding. And Henry and Clarence would go off on an exhibition to find bigfoot. Clarence only agreed to go for three days—he had never seen a bigfoot and didn't expect to find one now. Still, he gamely loaded up his truck with bigfoot tracking supplies: night vision goggles, photographic and recording equipment, tapes of alleged bigfoot calls, pheromone chips, bait fruit, and seventy-five pounds of plaster of Paris and fifty pounds of Hydrocal B-11 for capturing the imprints of bigfoot feet.

It was a long drive north to the Shoshone National Forest and the brothers used the time to plan their strategy.

"So I'm thinking, you can set up somewhere with the gun behind some cover, and I'll keep a look out for forest rangers so we don't get nabbed for poaching," Henry said.

"Wait a minute. Why do I have to carry the gun?"

"I've never shot anything before. I borrowed the rifle from a friend of dad's. You've hunted deer, at least."

Clarence insisted that he was not going to carry the gun under any circumstances, but the drive gave his brother ample time to deploy all of his persuasive car salesmanship tricks, and by the time they had set up their camp site Clarence found himself with the rifle in his hands and the thought in his mind that maybe he did need to shoot a bigfoot for the sake of science, after all. He was sure he wouldn't see a bigfoot anyway, so he might as well just carry the gun to shut his brother up. The threatening note he had received the week before worried him—it was time he came up with some solid proof, because he suspected that even with tenure he could be fired for insanity. "If you won't do it for me," Henry said in his closing arguments, "do it for Mom. Bag a bigfoot for Mom—she'd be so proud!" This left Clarence with the unsettling vision of a bigfoot head mounted on his mother's wall, but the notion stirred him all the same.

“Did Mom say anything to you about this?” Clarence asked.

“She told me that my brother needed help, and I’ve come to give it.”

The first two days of camping passed uneventfully. At night they set up the recording equipment to play loud bigfoot calls from a high spot on a hill and scattered fresh fruit and pheromone chips in the vicinity. In the morning they searched for tracks and scat but only found evidence of deer. Clarence stayed up listening all night, trying to hear if the recorded bellows would be answered in the woods. Henry fussed over the equipment, switching the tapes and playing them most of the night. They spent groggy mornings by the campfire, drinking strong coffee. They decided to hike around the area to scout it out, to see if there were too many other campers in their vicinity, and they spent the days tramping through the woods, hardly talking, before returning to camp for late afternoon naps.

Most researchers believed bigfoot to be nocturnal, but Clarence had always suspected they were crepuscular, and as the twilight approached for the third time on their trip, Clarence had a feeling he would see one. Henry was still upbeat, going about his routine doggedly, but Clarence had turned sour. While Henry went off to start playing the tapes again, Clarence lay on his belly with his gun commando ready, behind cover in a spot that gave him a clear view of a large area of the woods. There was no doubt in his mind that he would shoot the bigfoot if he saw it. What had the bigfoot ever done for him, anyway? It had brought him nothing but suffering and ridicule, because it existed and it did not exist—it refused to just disappear or to show itself once and for all. What did he have to go back to if he didn’t return with solid proof? His family would leave at the end of the week, and he would become again a solitary lunatic, sustained by tenure and eccentricity. Across the campfire the night before, Clarence had told Henry all he knew of bigfoot legends. The Lakota Sioux called bigfoot *Chiye-tanka*, elder brother, and saw him as a liminal link between animal and human consciousness, the

creature that could explain each to the other. The Ojibwe believed bigfoot appeared at times of trouble, to warn people when they were on the wrong path. Bigfoot know when people are searching for them, the legend runs, and only reveal themselves to those they choose.

"Choose me," Clarence thought, "and it will be the last choice you make." The sun smoldered on the horizon, gilding the trees as it set, and the underbellies of the clouds were shot with scarlet. A rock digging into Clarence's thigh began to pain him and he rose.

Then he saw it. Yellow eyes in the shadow of a tree. Great furry shoulders. Clarence's hands shook, but he raised his rifle and put his finger on the trigger. His heart pounded, he held his breath. The creature halted, its reddish fur backlit with a corona of fire. He expected it to flee, but it simply cowered in front of him, its head bowed under a tree branch, its eyes downcast. Clarence lowered his gun. He hadn't seen from which direction it had approached, but he sensed that it had been watching him for some time, and then it finally shuffled forward to give itself up. It seemed tired, as if hounded into submission through nights of bigfoot calls they had played in an endless loop. In the accounts that Clarence had read of bigfoot sightings, the animal usually turned and ran as soon as it was spotted. Still, Clarence expected more than this, a slump-shouldered hermit of a creature. It was perhaps seven feet tall, but it didn't stand as though it was.

Clarence placed his gun down in the undergrowth and then took a step forward, reaching out his hand. After all this time, he felt he deserved a closer look. What if he had managed to shoot or capture it? The next day, thousands of people would rush to this forest to search for others. And of course Clarence would have to submit to rounds of interviews on morning news programs. They would want to probe his psyche, to know all about him, and they would believe it was their right. Clarence took another step toward the creature, with his hand still outstretched, and it suddenly raised its eyes to meet his. It froze him with a look, a confirmation of mutual weariness. Clarence shuddered with the terror of being fully known.