

LAST OF THE BIGFOOTS

By Phil Parker

E: storiesbyphil@gmail.com
P: (+61)408-238-196

EXT./INT. RUSTY RED FORD - DAY

The cheap sedan speeds through snow past a row of parked Audis, Jeeps, and BMWs with "MASSACHUSETTS" license plates. It swings into an empty spot, revealing its plate: "OREGON."

TAI (V.O.)
Seriously, Mom, nineteen interviews in seven states and only one college called you back? You don't think that's weird?

HELEN HOWE (37), science teacher with a ponytail. At the wheel and on the phone. Spirited, anxious, late.

HELEN
They can all kiss my rear end. I have a good feeling about this one.

TAI (V.O.)
You should have a stack of offers.

Helen takes a breath. A flicker of doubt.

HELEN
Thanks, sweetie. That means a lot.

GRANDPA JIM (V.O.)
(background)
Knock 'em dead, Helen!

HELEN
(sours)
...You're at Grandpa's shop?

TAI (V.O.)
Mom, don't start.

HELEN
That nonsense of his will rot your brain, you know?

CLICK. Line dead... Helen stews, staring at a MARIE CURIE BOBBLEHEAD TOY on her dashboard

HELEN (CONT'D)
I'm guessing your dad didn't believe in Bigfoot, huh?

DING. Phone alert. Helen checks: "Final interview. 5 min."

She soaks up her view of the Ivy League campus before her, jaw hardening, determined to belong here -- and jumps out.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - SCIENCE CENTER - DAY

A modern building of shiny glass and steel. Statues of "Marie Curie - Einstein - Newton - Alice Ball" in the courtyard.

A plaque above the door reads:

"Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence."

INT. SCIENCE CENTER - DEAN'S OFFICE - DAY

DEAN LOI (55), firm but fair, peruses a file at her desk. Mahogany shelves with leather-bound books and science-y doodads grace the walls behind her. In front of her --

A nervous Helen waits in a plush leather chair, scratching the back of the TABBY CAT rubbing against her ankles.

She offers a tentative smile to a haughty PROFESSOR KAISER (60) standing beside the dean's desk.

DEAN LOI

Mother, widow, Ph.D... You've conquered some steep mountains, Helen... but our staffing committee was divided. Professor Kaiser here would like to ask you a question before he makes the deciding vote.

Helen sits up a little straighter. Prof. Kaiser eyeballs her.

PROF. KAISER

What possessed you to switch your Ph.D from mythology to chemistry?

Helen glances away. Sadness mixed with determination.

HELEN

Mom used to say fairy tales are a waste of time. When she died, I decided she was right. It was time to set a better example for my daughter.

Prof. Kaiser considers her. Gives Dean Loi a tiny nod.

DEAN LOI

Welcome to the faculty, Helen.

Relieved, Helen stands. Ready to prove herself.

KNOCK KNOCK. A door opens. A SECRETARY (male, 20s) strides over, hands Dean Loi an iPad, and whispers in her ear.

Helen puzzles at the dubious look he shoots her.

The dean and the professor study the iPad, troubled. Mrs. Loi peers over her glasses at Helen --

DEAN LOI (CONT'D)
 Before you abandoned your former
 Ph.D, did you write a thesis
 entitled... "Why Bigfoot is Real"?

Helen hesitates, teetering between defensive and desperate.

HELEN
 ...I don't believe that anymore.

Professor Kaiser SNORTS. Incredulous.

PROF. KAISER
 Studying mythology is one thing;
 thinking it's real is delusional.

HELEN
 Don't scientists have imaginations?

He dismisses her with a wave.

DEAN LOI
 Unfortunately, your paper is going
 around the academic grapevine.

Helen BUG-EYES -- then slumps with a dawning realization.

HELEN
 Why didn't anyone else tell me?

Prof. Kaiser stabs a finger at the thesis on the iPad --

PROF. KAISER
 Probably because that is evidence
 of poor judgment. From an adult.
 You should have listened to your
 mother sooner.
 (to Dean Loi)
 I withdraw my vote.

Helen stares, stunned. How did this go so bad so fast?

INT./EXT. RUSTY RED FORD - DAY

Helen slams the door. Marie Curie Bobblehead topples over.

Tires screech as the sedan reverses out of its spot.

EXT. OREGON BIGFOOT ADVENTURE TOURS - DAY

Light snow falls on a weatherworn 20ft-tall wooden statue of BIGFOOT at a small parking lot entrance.

On the other side of the lot -- a LOG CABIN with a sign:

"OREGON BIGFOOT ADVENTURE TOURS."

An old 4WD MINI-BUS with the same logo sits parked out front.

Helen, frazzled from days on the road, screeches to a stop in her red Ford. Dripping with resentment, she gets out --

Yanks open her trunk, grabs a brand-new AX, and lasers her wrath -- on Bigfoot's smiling face.

INT. OREGON BIGFOOT ADVENTURE TOURS - FRONT COUNTER - DAY

GRANDPA JIM (66), bushy beard, safari uniform, kind eyes, hands tickets to a FATHER and his LITTLE BOY at the register.

GRANDPA JIM

Here you go. Our Winter Two-for-One
Tour will leave in 10 minutes.

LITTLE BOY

Have you ever seen Bigfoot?

Grandpa looks left and right. Leans down to share a secret.