

Frostbite

Trudging through the snow, Jonah looked up at the sky, covering his eyes with his hands as he noticed the clouds forming over the horizon. His phone had no signal this far up in the mountains, but he didn't need it; he knew a storm when he saw one.

Jonah had been hiking for years, having visited many state and national parks to see each of their wonders, big and small. Since he was a little lad, he had loved the feeling of traveling through the woods, that sense of adventure one only finds on a lonely dirt paved path. It was a slice of heaven to him.

Today he wasn't hiking on a dirt path though, rather one covered in snow. He'd never experienced the snowy mountains before, and he figured he'd see what they are like in the winter, covered in a layer of fluffy snow and ice.

A cold breeze went down his spine. He'd prepared well, having brought multiple layers of jackets and pants, thick socks along with heavy duty hiking boots. He wore three different gloves, one of which was meant to be heated, but he had forgotten to charge the batteries, forcing him to make due with hand warmers. His head was covered by a hat, as his face was covered by a thick scarf and large dark sunglasses that obscured his eyes. To the average person, he might appear inhuman with how the clothing bloated his shape.

Yet despite it all, he still felt the effects of the sub-zero winds, cutting through to his core like his layers were nothing. It wasn't moving very fast, but if Jonah's intuition was correct, that wouldn't be the case for much longer. He would have to find shelter soon, or risk hypothermia.

He continued following the path, the occasional gust of wind keeping him wide awake as he moved. The clouds had moved faster than Jonah had anticipated, threatening to blot out the sun. He hadn't come across any houses or huts yet and realized he might never find a house out here. The area he was hiking in was meant to be remote, advertising the amazing view of the stars one could only find in this specific place. It was the kind of

advertisement every place has, and Jonah was said to say it worked like a charm on him.

Jonah watched in continued dread as the valley he oversaw grew darker and more foreboding, before the clouds casting the shadows moved over him, blotting out the sun. He began losing hope of finding anything as the first snowflake fell, followed by another, and another, before thousands of tiny drops of frozen water were descending down on him. The winds too, had begun to pick up, whipping through his defenses as he could feel himself begin to shiver.

As he thought about it, he thought burying himself in the snow might be the best way to survive. Igloos are made out of snow, after all. If people can survive in snow like that, maybe he could wait out the storm in a burrow hole. He kept the idea in his mind, paying no attention as he lost all feeling in his feet and hands, chalking it up to the frostbite beginning to take hold.

He looked around suddenly, realizing he had lost track of the path, it having been buried as the storm raged on. The snow began falling faster, thicker flakes smacking his now exposed eyes. He badly wanted to put his glasses back on, but found they blinded him more than the snow, the lack of sunlight contributing greatly. As his eyes were hit with snowflake after snowflake, they began to change color, moving from a dark green to a deep ocean blue.

The winds grew ever stronger, forcing Jonah to fight harder and harder against the winds. He felt as though they might just pick him up and throw him across the valley. Though they failed to lift him, the wind did manage to steal his scarf, blowing it away as Jonah desperately tried to grasp for it. The scarf long gone, snow began to attack Jonah's face, making it colder and colder, as all feeling faded. Jonah decided it would be best not to mourn the loss of the scarf or his now freezing face, rather to focus on finding a cave.

He'd heard from the tourist center that the mountains were home to many caves, some that went barely 30 feet into the rock, while others led to extensive cave systems miles under the earth. If he could just find one, he might be able to wait out the storm in it.

So preoccupied was he by this, that he did not notice as his face extended slightly, white scales forming along his growing snout and face. His gloves had fallen off as well, his nails growing into long, sharp talons as his hands turned to paws more suited for walking in snow and ice. His feet underwent similar changes, toes becoming clawed talons as they became more suited for cold weather.

If Jonah thought the winds would pick him up before, they were now more akin to tornado winds than anything else. So bad was it that he stumbled, lost his footing, and fell down a small cliff. It wasn't terribly steep, but it had rocks sticking out from it, rocks that made rips and tore holes in his pants and jacket, allowing the snow and cold to rush in, making the man feel colder than he ever thought possible.

Once he stopped rolling and landed, he tried getting up, but found the winds to be incredibly strong. As a result, he began crawling on his hands and feet, finding the structure of his legs to now better support such a stance, as blue scales began appearing and moving up his legs along with the cold that was ever assailing him.

Walking through the snow more like an animal now than a human, Jonah realized with great confusion that he could feel something dragging behind him in the snow. He looked back, swanning his long neck around to see a tail covered in hard blue scales. He swished the new appendage around, finding nothing wrong with it as he turned back.

As he walked, he felt an annoying tightness around his chest. He looked down to find his shirt had ridden up his body and the snow under him as he walked. He looked down to see his jacket had blown away in the wind, only his thick wool shirt remaining half way up his chest. The fabric had been stretched far beyond its intended range, pulling tight against his blueish white underside.

He used his claws to slice the shirt, watching as it satisfyingly flew away with the wind. With the shirt gone, he felt his wings suddenly fly open, basking in the feeling of freedom it provided. Jonah looked ahead of him, spotting the faint outline of a cave opening. Being the sole objective for so long, he began racing towards it, paying no mind as his now exposed manhood began shriveling up in the cold, slowly moving inside of him. His

manhood changed to womanhood, and his organs moved around to accommodate for the addition of a womb and other various organs.

Upon reaching the cave entrance, her thoughts had completely cleared, the objective she had had for so long now being fulfilled. Once she entered the cave, new memories of a different life entered her head. Jonah was no longer a suitable name, as she began remembering herself as Siveth, the memories and knowledge of dragonkind returning to her as the memories of her old life began to fade into fantasy.

As she walked further in, she nearly tripped over a sack of food, presumably a peace offering from the peasants who lived in the area. As she looked at it again, she suddenly remembered the boy who brought it to her, turning back to rush out the cave in search of the boy. The storm having entirely disappeared, Jonah too, began to fade into a distant memory, as Siveth ran into her new life.