

ABOMINATION : beginnings

The sun peeks through the clouds on a hot July day in the Colorado mountains, as slivers of sunlight dance on small waves across the top of the lake. A teenage boy lays lifeless on the shore with his tattered baseball cap pulled down over his face. His hands lie across his chest, fingers interlaced. A fishing pole is propped up on a rock, and a bobber floats gently in the water. The wind rustles through the tops of the tall aspens that surround the lake and the small teardrop shaped leaves twinkle as they twist.

Dry leaves crunch as a young man walks toward the boy. Dressed in a shirt and tie with slacks rolled up over his tennis shoes, he stops at the boy's side and looks down at him.

"Curtis" the young man shouts.

Curtis jumps and scrambles to pull his ball cap off of his face. "What. Who is...Jacob? Man, I was having a good dream. What do you want?" Curtis says with disgust.

Jacob laughs, "mom and dad told me to come find you. They're pretty pissed that you skipped church again."

"Sunday is supposed to be a day of rest," Curtis explains as he stands up and brushes himself off. "So I was resting, and getting a little fishing in while I was at it."

"Did you catch anything?"

"No, but I tried hard."

"Yeah, I saw."

Curtis chuckles as he picks up his fishing pole and reels it in. The two boys head for their car trying the whole way to shove each other into a tree. They climb into an old beat up truck and slam the squeaky doors.

“So how’s college?” Curtis asks.

Jacob grunts. “It’s alright. I’m just glad it’s over.”

“When did you get back?”

“Last night. Where were you?”

“I was out setting traps to keep our store stocked. Are you going to help me with it now that you’re back?” Curtis looked at his brother with an almost desperate look. “Cause you know, dad has kinda taken over since you left.”

Jacob cracks a smile, “yes I’ll run the store and you can trap. But you have to keep the store stocked with good pelts. I won’t be in there trying to pawn off some cheap rabbit and squirrel skins.”

Curtis breathes a sigh of relief and leans back in the seat. “You know me. When have I ever brought back cheap pelts?”

When the boys reach the house, their father meets them at the door. He stands just over six feet tall and salt and pepper hair sits atop his rugged face. His shirt is tight across his strong body as he stands in the doorway with a disgusted look on his face.

“Where have you been?” he says as Curtis cowers through the door.

“I was at the lake.” Curtis replies, trying to avoid eye contact.

“You were supposed to go to church with us. Your brother just got back from school yesterday and we were supposed to go to church as a family.”

“Well I didn’t know Jacob was coming home.”

“I told you last week. And you said you would go”

Curtis struggles, without success, to remember that conversation, but hoping to end the tongue-lashing, he apologizes.

“Go get cleaned up. Your mom has lunch ready.”

Few words are spoken to Curtis at the table. He keeps his eyes on his plate and eats quietly thinking that maybe they won't notice him if he stays silent.

After lunch the two boys go out to the garage so Curtis can show his brother all of his traps. The boys talk for hours about their store, and how rich they're going to be. The conversation lasts until the sun begins to fade into the horizon.

Curtis jumps up, wide eyed, “oh man,” he exclaims. “I forgot to set my traps. We sat here talking so long that it slipped my mind. I'll see ya later.” Curtis grabs a handful of traps and runs out the door.

“Alright man. I'll see you when you get home. Be careful,” Jacob shouts.

Curtis laughs. “You know me,” he yells back as he jumps into the old pick-up and drives as fast as he can toward the forest.

Just after sunset, Curtis arrives at one of his favorite trapping spots. He slams the truck into park and jumps out. Grabbing his handful of traps, he sprints off through the woods. As he gets closer to where he plans on setting his traps, he stops running and assumes a quieter pace. Gently he begins setting his traps. With only half-a-dozen traps, he knows this won't be a very productive night.

As Curtis sets the last of his traps, he hears one of them go off. The sound surprises him, because although he is being as quiet as he can, wild animals are very skittish and they have outstanding hearing. He sneaks through the trees to see what he caught. What he sees is not what he expects.

Huge, black and lifeless it lies in the moonlight. The shadows from the trees cloak the animal's true form, so Curtis moves closer. Still it lies motionless. Curtis knows that it can't be

dead, because the trap he used couldn't have killed anything this big. He creeps closer. No breath, no motion. It just lies there. For some reason, even though he knows better, Curtis reaches out and touches it.

It's as though Curtis' touch brings it to life. The animal spins around and brings him to the ground. Curtis tries to yell for help as the animal digs its claws into his shoulder, but when he hit the ground it knocked the air from his lungs. He knows that even if he could yell, he is so far into the woods, no one could hear. The beast leans over Curtis and stares him in the eyes. Curtis knows at that moment that he is the one that got trapped. The animal bends down and sinks its teeth into Curtis' arm. He tries to scream. He tries to move. Claws and teeth sink further into his flesh.

A shotgun blast. The beast flinches. It pulls its teeth from Curtis' arm and looks through the trees. A horrible growl seeps from the beast. Blood and drool drip from razor sharp teeth onto Curtis' face. Another shotgun blast. The animal yelps. That shot hits it in the face. As the beast turns to run away, its claws tear open Curtis' shoulder. And then he hears the most wonderful sound he has ever heard – his brothers voice.

Jacob bandages the wounds as best he can, and rushes Curtis to the hospital. Surgeons feverishly slave over Curtis, trying to repair his shoulder and arm. After four and a half hours of surgery, the doctors leave an unconscious Curtis lying on an operating table and inform his parents that, aside from some major scaring, he will be fine.

In a hospital bed, Curtis lies comatose for nearly a week. Horrible visions of brutal murders run through his mind. Can-can girls and cowboys, hippies and beatniks are ripped to pieces in his dreams. He sees through the eyes of the killer as if he were the one killing. He tries

to stop it, he tries to control it, but it continues. The monster in his dreams is driven by savage instinct. No logic, no compassion.

After five days Curtis opens his eyes. Wide eyed he looks around the room wondering if this is another dream. Jacob is sleeping in a chair in the corner. When Curtis sees Jacob, a sense of relief floods over him.

“Jacob” Curtis says in a raspy voice.

Jacob twitches and opens his eyes slowly. He looks around the room to see who called his name. Seeing nothing out of the ordinary, he repositions himself to go back to sleep. As he shifts around in the chair Jacob glances at Curtis.

“You’re awake!” Jacob yells as he jumps up. “I have to call mom and dad.”

“Jacob, shhhhhh.” Curtis grabs his head and lays back, “quiet, bro. My head is killing me.”

“Oh, sorry. I just got excited.”

Jacob picks up the phone and calls their parents. Curtis can here his moms screams of excitement through the phone even though he is six feet away. Jacob says good-bye and hangs up.

“They’re on their way,” Jacob says as he turns to his brother. “Mom’s a little excited.”

“Yeah, I heard,” Curtis says weakly. “How long have I been out?”

“Five days. How do you feel?”

“Horrible, but at least I’m awake now. I’ve had the worst dreams.”

Jacob pulls his chair up next to Curtis’ bed as the bloody stories are told. Curtis tells how in his dreams he was driven by instinct and rage. No mercy, no fear, and no control. Jacob advises Curtis not to tell anyone about his dreams.

“What was it, Jacob?”

“I don’t know. I tracked it the morning after I got you to the hospital. I found where it bled out, but there was nothing there. I searched well beyond where an animal with that much blood loss could have gone – and found nothing,” Jacob says with concern in his eyes.

When the boy’s parents arrive, their mother feverishly and hysterically tries to make Curtis comfortable until Jacob and his father calm her down. Curtis has to promise that until the animal is caught, he won’t go into the woods by himself, and one of them has to carry a gun. But a forced promise isn’t much of a promise.

Curtis heals up quickly as most nineteen year olds do and goes home. He stays in bed as long as he can stand then goes about his business of repairing and cleaning his traps until he rips a stitch. His mom fixes his bandages and makes him get back in bed, and the cycle repeats. This goes on for a week, until Curtis’ mom gets tired of trying to keep him in bed.

Jacob and his father continue night after night hunting the animal that attacked Curtis, and night after night they return unsuccessful.

“Let me go with you,” Curtis pleads one day.

“No way, Curtis. Dad would kill me if he found out I took you back out there.”

“Come on, Jacob. You know I’m better at tracking than you. I’ll just go look, and maybe set a few traps.”

“No, Curtis. If you go out, dad will have to take you.”

Curtis throws his hands in the air, “fine. I’ll go ask dad then.”

Curtis pleads and bargains for nearly two days before his dad agrees to take him. He is as excited as a kindergartener on his first field trip. Running into the garage, Curtis grabs a handful of traps and throws them into the back of the truck.

“What are you doing?” Jacob asks as he steps into the garage.

“Dad said I could go tonight. I’m getting ready,” Curtis replies. A grin stretches across his face.

“I don’t think he meant you could go trapping,” Jacob grabs his shotgun off the wall and holds it up. “We’re trying to kill it, not trap it.”

“But we can trap it, then kill it,” the smile fades from Curtis’ face. “I’m taking them with me.”

“We’ll see,” Jacob says smugly as he walks out of the garage.

Curtis kicks the truck and spits toward the door. He has been in a hospital bed for a week and cooped up in the house for just as long. He finally has permission to do what he enjoys, and he’s not going to let anyone stop him.

As the sun begins to fade, the boys load the truck for their hunt. The old truck spits and sputters when they start it, and with a boom and a cloud of grey smoke the sputtering stops and the engine smooths out.

The truck pulls out of the garage as their mother stands at the front door of the house with a concerned look on her face. She waves as she watches her husband and two boys drive away.

Their night is uneventful other than the fox that Curtis caught, and they ride back to the house in disappointment. Curtis feels torn, because although they didn’t catch what they were looking for, he did catch something. They pull into the garage and pile out. Jacob and his dad head into the house while Curtis drags the fox out of the back and begins skinning it. He feels alive again; finally back to doing what he loves.

After several weeks of hunting what can't be found, Jacob and his dad lose interest, and the promise that Curtis made is forgotten. Curtis continues going out to trap hoping to catch the illusive animal that attacked him.

One night, Curtis goes into the woods to set his traps. He sets the last of them as the sun turns red and edges its way down behind the mountain. Finding a comfortable spot, Curtis sits down and waits for his traps to spring. He looks up through the trees at the full moon and the sun disappears.

Curtis' skin begins to get hot. His bones ache and his head starts throbbing. Confused, he looks down at his arms and sees thick black hair growing. The pain continues to grow, so he decides he should get home and come back for his traps later. When he stands up, it feels as if his skin bursts into flame. He yells and falls to his knees. His bones feel like they are breaking and his blood boils. His ribs all burst from their place at the same time, and his knees snap. His joints dislocate as he screams into the night. His mind fades and his senses heighten. Logic is replaced by instinct and rage. Muscles tear away from bone and reattach as the joints slam themselves back together. His hands and feet feel like they are crushed as the bones burst apart and then rejoin. Curtis breathes heavily as the pain fades. He opens his eyes and peers through the trees. A hunger grows inside, but not for food – for blood. As he catches the scent of prey he looks up at the moon and howls.

He races through the woods on all fours until he comes upon his prey. The deer doesn't have time to react before the claws of the werewolf tear into its flesh. Curtis – now a lycan – tears the deer to pieces. He feasts on the meat and laps its blood, gorging until there is nothing left to eat. He roams the forest all night looking for more prey, killing everything that crosses his path - until sunrise.

The beast sees the light grow in the east, and he stares in defiance. The sun peeks above the horizon and the animal howls. His blood boils and his skin burns. Joints dislocate and muscle tears from their place. His brain feels as if it is going to burst through his eyes. Bones crack and pop and slam into place as they change size and shape. His knees snap and his hands and feet crackle as they return to their original shape.

Curtis falls to the ground and passes out with his face in the dirt. Naked and alone he lies in the woods, his only covering is the blood of the animals he slaughtered. He awakens as his dad rolls him over and picks him up.

“No. Stay away from me,” Curtis yells as he scrambles out of his fathers arms. “Stay away. I don’t want to hurt you.”

“Curtis, it’s us,” Jacob says as he edges closer to Curtis. “Calm down. It’s just us.”

Curtis looks down at his hands, then at his body. No trace of werewolf remains. His hands and body are normal. Nothing but blood and dirt covers his skin.

“But...I don’t understand,” he says. He scans his body looking for any trace of what he had become. “Last night I...”

“Mom was worried when you didn’t come back last night, so we came looking for you,” Jacob explains. “We found new tracks of the animal that attacked you, but we lost him. He was headed this way.”

“No. It was me. I am the beast. You were tracking me.”

“Come on, son. Let’s get you to the hospital,” their dad says as he tries to pick Curtis up.

“I’m not hurt,” Curtis yells as he pushes away. “This isn’t my blood. I’m a werewolf. That’s what bit me, and now I’m cursed.”

“Curtis, you had a rough night,” Jacob puts his arm around Curtis. “Let’s go home. we’ll talk about it later.”

The three of them make their way back through the woods to the car. Jacob pulls a blanket from the trunk for Curtis to cover himself with. Curtis drapes the blanket over his shoulders and climbs into the back seat to go to sleep.

“I’ll go get the truck,” Jacob’s dad tells him. “You get him home and cleaned up. And keep it quiet. I don’t want your mom to worry any more than she needs to.”

Jacob gets in and starts the car. After he shuts the door he looks in the rearview mirror, “what happened last night, Curtis?”

“I turned into a werewolf. I remember an overwhelming desire to kill. It was brutal. I couldn’t control it. That’s why we couldn’t find the other one, because he turned into a human and walked away.”

“That sounds like one of those dreams you told me about.”

“Yeah, except it wasn’t a dream. It happened. And if the movies are right, it will happen every full moon for the rest of my life,” Curtis lays his head down and falls asleep.

And it does happen. Every full moon, Curtis changes into a werewolf. I wish this was a movie I saw, or a book I read, I’d even settle for a bad dream. But this is my story - I am Curtis. My brother didn’t believe me at first, but after I came home and told him I had killed someone, he helped me build a cage strong enough to hold me. Now once a month I spend the night in a steel cage howling at the moon. Without my brother, who knows how many people I would have killed by now.

My life ended on that night. I have no friends, because although I am in my thirties now, I still look like I am nineteen. It’s hard for people to understand why they get grey hair and

wrinkles but I still look like a teenager. The only people I have contact with are my family and a blind, old pastor who keeps telling me that God loves me just the way I am – if he only knew.

So if you're in the woods, late at night, and the moon is full – run. Run as hard as you can, because I may be coming. And if I catch you, pray that you are lucky enough to die, because if you don't, you'll end up like me. Cursed. An abomination.