



Legend Tripping

by

Crymsyn
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“Come on. It’ll be fun.” Jerome set his pack on the table and began to remove the contents.

Bethany crossed her arms and eyed the things he had spread on the table. Some were the usual items they took when they went out hunting: voice recorder, digital camera, regular camera, thermometer, K-2 Meter, and a few squished granola bars. However, the baby powder made her lift an eyebrow. She picked it up and held it out to him. “What is this for? Are you going to powder the ghosts’ asses? Or try and cover up a demon’s B.O.”

“Ha. Ha. You think you’re funny.”

She set the white container down. A sense of dread climbed up her back like a large spider. It wasn’t going away either. Jerome didn’t have the best luck with ghost hunting. She had suffered because she had gone with him. If she didn’t go, then he would find himself in trouble. “No. I *know* I’m funny. You have to seriously stop your ‘hobby’. Don’t you recall what happened last time you decided to check something out?”

“Pfft.” Jerome waved her off. “That was nothing. So what a shadow person tagged along and started some mischief in the house. Going to the asylum was bitchin’. Getting the E.V.P of the growl was even better. And all those ‘Get out’ or ‘I’m going to kill you.’” That was awesome.”

Bethany raked her fingers over her face and shook her head. Her friend just didn’t get it. “Sweetie, I’ve told you before. You’re playing with fire. One of these days you’re going to end up with something that won’t go away. We’ve been over this before. The last time I went out with you that shadow person didn’t stay in his hole in the abandoned asylum. He came over to my house and stuck around. I had to get Stephanie over and have her smudge his ass out. And the poltergeist broke all of my grandmother’s china because you made fun of it.”

He grabbed some more batteries from the drawer and stuffed them into his backpack. She watched as he rearranged everything back into the sack and added snacks in case he got hungry. One pocket contained half a roll of toilet paper in case he ran into a bathroom emergency. On one occasion the bathroom tissue had disappeared from his bag, taken by some entity, and strewn around the kitchen of a house. Jerome had accused her of doing it. How could she have done it? Cameras clearly showed the roll appeared in the kitchen and was thrown around. Jerome hefted the bag from the table and tossed it into the corner of the room.

“You gonna come or what?”

“You didn’t tell me where you were going.”

He slapped the heel of his left hand against his forehead. “Duh. Sorry. I thought I did when I texted you.”

“Nope. Nada.”

“I was listening to this podcast. The guest was telling the host about his experience he had legend tripping. You know proving them to be fake or real. Most of the ones he investigated turned out to be shit. One proved to be true. I went to his website and found the pictures of where it is. It’s only eight hours from here. Road trip?”

She held up her hands. “Wait. Wait. Eight hours. I’m not sure I can get off from the store to go with you.”

His lip turned down into an over exaggerated frown. “Please. Look. I’ll show you. I know when you see it you’ll want to come.” Jerome opened his laptop and pulled up the website. Once it loaded, he pointed to the picture. The grainy image showed white powder on the back of some green Taurus. In the background was an overgrown railroad track. The impression of dozens of small handprints were scattered in the powder. Better quality pictures revealed actual swirls of the fingerprints. Dozen of them with different timestamps on the photos were displayed on the site.

“Yeah. Those are neat. Those could be really good Photoshop. I’ve seen more convincing evidence come from someone with a little skill with a mouse and a photo editing program.”

“Why are you so skeptical?”

“Because I have to see it first before I know it’s real. You go out to these haunted places, poke at whatever entity’s there, and wait for it to eat you. You provoke way too much and shit gets pissed off at you. Why do you think it comes home with you? It gets the idea you enjoy being fucked with.”

“I don’t go there to wait to be eaten.”

“Hmm...Whatever. I’ve told you before I go there to make sure you don’t get into any more trouble than you already do. I have a healthy respect for what’s there. You have no idea how many times I apologize to the entities for all the shit you pull. Fine. I’ll tell Sheri I’ll go with you so you don’t get lost.”

He leaned back in his chair. “I knew you’d say yes.”

Bethany rolled her eyes. “Yeah. Whatever. Don’t be an ass and rub it in. When are we leaving?”

“I was thinking about Saturday. Spend a couple of nights there and then come back home.”

“Fine. Sheri can watch the shop while I’m gone. I’ll meet you here Saturday at 6.”

“In the morning?”

“No. At night, dumbass. Of course. If we have an eight-hour drive and we go straight through then we won’t get there until two not counting traffic or anything else. And I want to sleep before we go out. Make the hotel reservations and I’ll pack the food.”

“I love you.”

“I know. I’m going home. Night, Jer.”

“Night. Bethany. And thanks.”

She grunted and walked out the door wondering what the hell kind of dark adventure they were getting themselves into now.

* * * *

What the GPS on Bethany’s phone showed as an eight-hour drive turned into a ten-hour trip because of an accident not to mention all the stops. Finally, they settled into their adjoining hotel rooms. Her body longed for sleep, but Jerome nearly bounced off the walls with excitement. He sat on her bed and wouldn’t shut up. Bethany had to shove him back through the adjoining door and lock it so she could get some sleep. She fell onto the mattress and lost consciousness immediately. Jerome’s incessant knocking jarred her from a very refreshing dream with George Clooney massaging Jason Momoa. Both were naked and she enjoyed the exquisite view. Although George was not one of her normal dream guys, but in the moment it did the trick.

She grumbled. Her stomach responded as she padded to the door. “What the fuck do you want?”

Jerome shoved the pizza box at her and came into the room. His brown hair glistened from getting out the shower. He looked rested and happy. But Jerome also had time to sleep, clean up, and eat. She took the pizza box and set the box down on the dresser.

“You ready to go?”

“Does it look like I’m ready?”

He shrugged. “We said 9. I let you sleep until 10.”

“Fuck.” Bethany dragged her hands through her hair and wrapped it into a makeshift bun. She grabbed a pen from the nightstand and shoved it through her hair to make the bun stay. “Fine. Fine. Give me five minutes.”

Her friend shrugged and sat on the bed. “k”

Bethany downed a piece of pizza and then took another one for the road. She scooped up her bag and slung it over her shoulder. They got out to the car and she set her hands on the wheel. “Where too? This is your expedition.”

He loaded the directions into his phone and the GPS started talking to her. Thirty minutes later she drove down a desolate road in the middle of nowhere. “Are you sure this is the right place?”

She leaned over the steering wheel. A hundred feet before her was an overgrown railroad line. Weeds poked through the tracks. The crossing was nothing more than iron rails and gravel. A rusted pole stood by the side of the crossing. She put her high beams on and saw it was a warning sign. A yellow diamond shape that said ‘Look out for locomotive’ with a line through the middle of the diamond saying Railroad Crossing. The sign hadn’t been pilfered by some picker who would try to make a quick buck. On the other side of the tracks, the darkness and an overgrown forest swallowed the road. The potholed cement resembled more of a mine field instead of road.

“This is the place matches the pictures. Let’s go.” Jerome got out of the car.

She put it in park and turned the engine off but kept the key in the ignition. Jerome opened his pack and brought out the baby powder. He sprinkled it onto the top of the trunk until it was blanketed by white. “That should do it. We have to drive the car onto the tracks. The spirits of the children are supposed to push the car over the tracks. Come on. We’ll set up the cameras on both sides of the track. Will you get the equipment out of the backseat?”

She rolled her eyes but pulled the tripods out. Bethany set one up with the camera in front of the car. Jerome stood the other one at the back of the auto. The third he set at an angle so they could see the car and down the railway. She inspected the sights and made sure everything looked good. They had the video cameras running and a fourth motion camera sat on the right side of the tracks. She listened to be sure the train wasn’t coming and heard nothing but chirping crickets and the occasional owl hoot.

The track was dead.

“Looks good. You ready to do this?”

“I guess,” she shrugged. What she really wanted was chocolate ice cream and a cold, hard cider. That and more sleep. Sleep was her friend. Bethany enjoyed the hunts and investigations they went on, but again she did it to keep him out of trouble. Jerome might not think he was doing any damage or attracting any wayward spirits to him, but he did.

“Come on. You were all excited about it earlier.”

She checked her phone. The time light up it was near midnight. “Yeah. That was ten hours and a couple of coffees in me ago. I’m just tired. Tell me what happened to make the kids’ spirits remain here. Did their bus breakdown on the tracks like all urban legends say?”

“Yeah, I thought that, too. This is different. These children were on the train when it derailed. The accident devastated the town and then it became a ghost town. It’s said that anyone who has stopped on the track they push it over. They never did figure out what caused the train

wreck.” He pointed down the track. “The remains of one of the cars is over into the trees. If you look you can see how the trees have grown through it.”

She strained to see where he pointed, but—and maybe it was a trick of her eyes—she made out the faint outline of something rectangular in the forest underneath all the brush. A faint wind blew up and raised the hair on the back of her neck. The crickets stopped chirping. The air grew heavy. “Okay. Too bad about the train. Let’s get this over with. Maybe the spirits are going to be nice tonight and move the car for us. Honestly, though, I’m not sure we should be here.”

Jerome slid into the front passenger seat and closed the door. Bethany leaned against the side of the car and searched the dark forest. Something prickled her instincts. Her flesh felt like someone shoved pins into it. She wiggled her thumbs until the joints cracked, but it didn’t make her feel any better. It only put her more on edge. This place didn’t feel right. She had been in other locations with numerous deaths, and took in the overwhelming sorrow associated with them. Here the whole environment felt like there should be a bad smell to it letting them know it was rotten. Maybe it was the imprinted emotions of the tragedy that happened. Or maybe it was the spirits letting her know they weren’t welcomed. A light winked in the distance. Bethany strained to listen but didn’t hear a train coming.

“You going to do this?” Jerome asked from inside of the car.

“Yes. Coming.” The light bobbed closer to them. She took in a deep breath and addressed it. “I’m sorry for interrupting your night. We don’t mean any harm. Forgive my partner if he offends you. We just want to know if you’re here.” Sliding into the driver’s seat, she grabbed the car door and swung it closed. It felt somewhat safer inside of the vehicle. The edgy feeling hadn’t dissipated. Even within the metal walls the electricity of the charged atmosphere remained.

The roar of the engine startled her. She jumped. Bethany drove onto the crossing. She set the auto into neutral and turned off the lights.

“You’re supposed to leave it a few yards before the track. They push it up and over,” Jerome protested.

“Let’s see what they do with the car right here. It’s always good to change it up a little bit. You can’t always live by what Urban Legends say. The same thing with what you find on the internet. You never know if it’s all true.”

“Yeah, I get that. I just didn’t have a chance to talk to any witnesses. I trolled the websites and found what I could to make sure it’s all legit.”

“How about we be still and see what happens.”

That shut her friend up. Jerome squirmed in his seat. Making him play the quiet game stretched his patience, but it was the only way she could feel the night around them. She glanced back over Jerome’s shoulder. The light in the distance drew closer. *It’s gotta be a local on an*

ATV coming out to see what we're doing. As it got closer it winked out. They waited a few minutes and nothing. She tapped her fingers on her jeans.

More minutes ticked by.

Jerome's nervous energy rubbed off on her. She reached for her keys. Before her fingers touched the key chain, the car rocked forward. Jerome let out an excited squeak. Bethany grabbed the steering wheel as another shove from the back happened again. She held onto the wheel harder as the tires moved. The car rolled over the tracks and down onto the other side. It came to a stop. The camera flashes popped all around the outside of the vehicle. The flares left her blinded.

It all stopped.

The car engine died.

Outside someone giggled. Bethany peered out the windows and saw nothing. Laughter erupted all around them. A rock dinged off the door. Something heavier shoved itself against the car. She gazed out of the window but darkness greeted her. Suddenly, a hand thumped against the glass. Bethany pulled away. Fingerprints appeared on her window followed by a full palm print. She raised her hand and spread it over the impression on the glass. Her hand covered the print on the glass. Chuckling continued and surrounded the car. A great wind came up and shook them.

Bethany waited for more to happen. Jerome had gone white. He put his hand on the door. She caught his other arm before he could get the door open. "Wait."

"But—"

She shot him a glare and put her finger to her lips. Something told her to wait. Another loud giggle sounded right next to her side of the car. Jerome was about ready to jump out and go find out what evidence they had gotten. She released his arm, turned the lights back on, and set the gear back into park. Bethany opened the door and slipped out, careful not to disturb anything. They walked around the back. Jerome clutched his pack. He dipped into it and pulled out another camera. She switched her phone camera mode to take pictures. She shut the door and snapped a few pictures of the palm print.

"Beth, you gotta come back here."

She walked around the back and noticed the light down the track was closer this time. Jerome was practically jumping out of his skin. He pointed to the trunk. Her gaze settled on the white powder. Small round fingerprints had made an impression in the powder.

"See. I told you so."

“Yeah. Yeah. You told me so.” She moved her gaze up the progression of the little handprints. The hair stood up on the back of her neck. Something didn’t feel right. A light breeze caressed her skin and made her shiver. The crickets had come back chirping in full force. The call of a dog or coyote howled in the distance. Jerome kept taking pictures of the trunk. She examined the progression of fingerprints. The children’s fingerprints changed from small four finger and a thumb to something with only three fingers and a thumb with a triangular shaped palm. Those prints crawled up the back of the window and stopped when it hit the roof. When she glanced up, she saw the light charging closer.

“Jerome. We need to get out of here.”

“What are you talking about? This is awesome.” He kept snapping pictures.

She tugged on his shirt and felt the warmth leave her face. “No. It’s not. These are not children. I don’t know what the fuck they are, but we have to go. NOW!”

“Beth, what are you talking about?”

She yanked the camera down from his face and pointed to the handprints. “Those are *not* children’s handprints.”

Her friend’s face went whiter than cream. “Yeah. Okay. Okay. Grab the gear.”

Bethany gathered the equipment. Bethany shoved everything into the backseat and kept an eye on the light. She didn’t want to even be there when the light got to them. Her instincts said it was all around bad news. Bethany drove down the dead end to turn around.

“Shit. Shit. We forgot the other camera.” Jerome pointed to the other camera facing the light. “I’ll grab it.” He jumped out of the car, grabbed the tripod, and shoved into the backseat. The door closed behind her. The car vibrated. Something was coming. In the distance, a whistle blew. Jerome screamed and dived into the car.

“Go. Go.”

“What’s the matter? What did you see?”

He shook his head. “D-doesn’t mattteerr . Go.”

Before she could get off the tracks the light slammed into them. A cold chill filled the car until the windows froze over. The scream of the train’s whistle pierced her ears. She covered her ears with both hands, but it didn’t drown it out. The car moved quicker and the light blinded her. Bethany buried her head in her hands and braced for impact. A rush of air filled the car and she heard the door slam. The stench of burning coal filled the interior. Screeching brakes and childish screams erupted around her.

Bethany cried out.

“Drive. Beth. Drive.” Jerome quivered in his seat.

Bethany floored her car and drove straight down the road. Her heart hammered as fast as the engine revved. She drove until the light and the tracks had disappeared. Finally, the atmosphere return to normal. She tried to catch her breath. Jerome clutched the camera from the tripod but hadn’t regained any color. The last picture taken on the camera remained frozen on the screen. She pried the camera from his hand and studied the screen.

The image showed the engine of an oncoming train barreling toward them. The thing that caught her attention was the thing sitting on top of her car. A creature not a child the size of a toddler with its knees drawn up to its chin. It had a triangular shaped head with small curved horns. Its chin rested on top of its curved talons. The most frightening thing about the image was the large smile on its face looking right into the camera.

“What the fuck is this?”

Jerome shook his head. “I don’t know.”

Bethany handed him back the camera. “It knew we were there.”

“Yes. Can we go now?”

“Yeah. Also, this is it. No more investigations. Agreed.”

Jerome nodded. Maybe it had finally sunk in the damage he was doing from the hunts.

“Good.”

Bethany took a deep breath, but her nerves were rattled. She took hold of the steering wheel once more to head back to the hotel. The further she got from the railroad, the calmer she became. At the next stoplight she felt like things had gone back to normal. And then--.

Something tapped on the roof of her car.

Crymsyn Hart Bio

Crymsyn Hart is a multi-genre author from Horror, Urban Fantasy, and Romance. Her years of experience at Boston's oldest psychic salon doing readings and her encounters with the supernatural have inspired many novels. She's a lover of all things dark and goth. Vampires, grim reapers, and other paranormal creatures tend to end up in her books no matter how hard she tries to keep them away.

She currently resides in Charlotte, NC with her hubby and their two dogs. By day she is conquering the world of Commercial Insurance, but by night she listens to the voices in her head telling her which rabbit hole to go down to find the perfect plot bunny.

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