

Prose Third Place
“The Entries” by Katie Hunt
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The Daily News

BREAKING NEWS!

EXPLORER'S JOURNAL DISCOVERED

John Holloman’s journal documenting his adventures has just been found by Mary and Todd Cubart, a couple that went hiking through a forest when they stumbled on treasure. John Holloman is a household name with a tale similar to Amelia Earhardt. Holloman was an avid adventurer and explorer in his prime, documenting all sorts of life and nature. He's most well-known for his mysterious disappearance in 1958. He left his daughter, Elizabeth Holloman, and his home on August 1st, to explore a mysterious forest nobody had dared to fully document. Researchers estimate that he reached the forest sometime between the 3rd and 5th of August. He never returned home to his daughter. Friends and family have been very quiet about his disappearance, but have told the public that he was a kind, intelligent man that would never abandon his daughter. What tragic events led to the unfortunate disappearance of John Holloman? Well, we've just found evidence that could either solve this mystery, or create more confusion. Here are the entries.

Journal Entry #1

8/4

My name is John Holloman, and this is the first entry marking my new 3-month exploration! These entries will keep track of my journey exploring a large forest no man has traversed through. I've only been in it once, but so far the forest is dense with foliage and some of the tallest trees I've seen. I can't wrap my arms around their trunk, and the leaves block out most sunlight. I will be recording my discoveries during my travels, in hope they may be of use to future explorers. I'm heading off to bed now wishing for a good night's rest, and I will check back in soon with - hopefully - lots of discoveries!

Journal Entry #2

8/9

The forest is very unique. I encountered new plants, one of which is a beautiful flower I've decided to name the Lizzie, after my 9-year daughter, Elizabeth. I've left her with our relatives, and I already miss her dearly. I cannot wait to come home to her and show her my discoveries. That is, if I make it out! I'm just joshing of course, but this forest is so dense sometimes I fear I'll get lost. The ground looks the same everywhere you go, and when I mark nearby trees with my knife, I come back to see that the markings are gone and the bark has grown back. This forest seems more alive than other places I've explored. Another interesting thing about this place is the

ambience. Randomly, I'll be walking and everything is normal. Birds chirping, gusts of wind, leaves rustling, all normal sounds you'd hear in a forest. But then, something strange happens. All sounds of life suddenly disappear. It's a deafening silence I've never encountered before. Sound itself is sucked from existence, and it sends chills down my spine. The sound comes back after a while, but the forest is starting to seem more ominous than I had expected. Nevertheless, don't fret! This explorer won't leave until he's discovered and documented everything there is to know!

Journal Entry #3

8/19

These past weeks have been very valuable for my goal of documenting this jungle of life! Many of my books are being used for flower-pressing, and I've been having a fun time bird-watching. Many would assume that I'd start to feel lonely, and while I miss my daughter, I don't feel alone at all. The forest is filled with all sorts of life, but that isn't the main reason. I frequently feel like I'm being watched. I'm not traditionally superstitious, but I've never fully shaken the feeling of hidden eyes tracking my every move since I arrived. Oh joy, I must be getting paranoid! Nonetheless, I'm heading to bed in hopes of a productive - and not frightening - adventure tomorrow!

Journal Entry #4

8/31

I'm starting to feel more and more alarmed. The sound-sucking I mentioned earlier is happening closer and closer to my camp, and I feel as if the forest is starting to somehow... dislike me. I'd normally call that outright poppycock, but now I'm not so certain. Having no human connection for a month hasn't helped my mental state, either. I'm starting to wonder whether this trip was worth it... I just miss Elizabeth.

Journal Entry #5

9/2

It's 8:00 in the morning, and I woke up at 2:00am to someone- no, something outside my camp. I woke up covered in cold sweat to deafening silence (as usual), but I simultaneously felt the eyes somewhere. I looked outside, and saw what I can only describe as a monster. I only noticed it because it was actively moving. This doesn't sound as spine-chilling as it is in person, but I assure you, this was the most petrifying, sinister experience I have - and will ever - encounter. I cannot describe the feeling of utmost horror that passed through me, but I will try to tell you what it looked like. It's as if a tall tree had come to life and cut off the top of it. It was just over 4 metres tall, or 14 feet. It had long, brittle arms and a rectangular, faceless 'head'. Its movements were lurching and sudden, and it was the only thing making noise, besides me. It sounded like large twigs snapping when it shifted and it (somehow) breathed raggedly. Once I regained motion, I ducked down silently and hid until I heard it leave and sound came back. I was (and still currently am) trembling like a leaf, and I haven't moved since. I need to leave. My hands are shaking and I can't write properly, so I'm going to stop. I'm leaving as soon as possible, as I now

fear for my life. I promised Elizabeth I'd return. My next journal entry will be when I am safe with my daughter. John Holloman, signing off.