

Into The Woods



*For Kris, Chris, Jase and all the gang at Goodreads
And for all of the readers who have made my dreams possible.
Thank you*

It was starting to get cold out, nothing too chilling, just that snap of crispness in the air that promised that the blood of summer would be freezing on the gravel in no time. Noah took a deep breath and prayed for the murder to start. Summer was hot, sticky, and smells always seemed worse during those sunny, sizzling months.

Smell was a problem in Sherwood Forest.

Noah had lived there his whole life, born to a contortionist and The Fabulous Fish Woman Wanda (whose name was really Judith and looked nothing like a fish unless you looked really hard and found her gills). When he'd been a kid he'd loved it. What little boy doesn't dream of living in a circus? It wasn't until he got older that he realized Sherwood didn't count. It wasn't even the real Sherwood Forest, just a spot of wooded land in the upper peninsula of Michigan that some ringmaster or another had won in a card game nearly a century ago. In those woods was secreted a whole little village made of old tents and wooden trailers, rusted buses and a few thrown together houses that never kept out the wind, rain or snow quite enough.

Sherwood Forest was where Circus performers went when they left the circus. Not all of the performers, just the ones no one else wanted. Mostly the freak show, some carnies that must have done something horrible. Noah wouldn't have been surprised to find out each person in town was wanted by the law. Every single one of them, his parents included, acted like anyone from outside the village limits was a threat, and that leaving the village would be a death sentence. The distrust had been bred into the next generation as well. It was so bad that people had died rather than go to a doctor in the nearest town. People had starved rather than asking help from a neighbor outside of Sherwood. Noah foresaw a lot of inbreeding in the future of the little community, unless something drastically changed. It would have to be big to get most folk in Sherwood to even look past their forest.

Then again, melodrama was the life blood of their people, he was sure.

"Noah!"

He glanced up from his porch and smiled at Hands McMalen. People always laughed about men with large feet and hands, guessing that a good size there meant even greater endowment elsewhere. Noah could tell them for a fact it was true. Hands' dad had been a literal giant, his mom was in the freakshow, oversized head. Somehow the genes worked in Hands' favor though, and Noah was not complaining. The hyper boy was his best friend in the whole world. And fuck, was he something under the sheets...or on the ground...or in the lake...or that once in a tree...

"Carol is looking for you."

The good mood that had been building crashed and Noah's cock, which had taken extreme interest in the proximity of someone who treated it so nicely, shriveled up in terror.

Carol...damn it.

“Come on baby daddy, let’s go. Do you know if it’s a boy or a girl yet? Because my cousin’s friend’s uncle’s barber told my sister that if you mix Drain-o crystals in with the momma’s urine, there’s a chemical reaction that will tell you what the baby is.”

“Hands, this is really freaking me out okay? Try not to be so excited about it!”

“But my best buddy is gonna be a daddy!”

Noah wrinkled his nose in disgust. “Yeah, daddy of an undead baby. Undead! There is no heart beat and it’s still moving and growing in there. How the Hell am I supposed to be the father, Hands? I might be missing something, but I don’t remember ever being undead...you know what, I don’t even remember being heterosexual!”

“You’re harshing the happy vibes, Noah,” Hands frowned only a brief moment before that huge, usually infectious grin was back. “Smile, you’re gonna be a daddy!”

“I’m gonna be sick.”

Carol’s place was the only real and solid building in town. Her dad had done the tech work and special effects for a big road circus, but now he was more like a mad scientist of some kind and her mom was a carnie, one of the road hands, the woman looked like a lumberjack dressed in drag. Carol looked like the bride of Frankenstein. Yeah, that was attractive.

“You think her dad experimented on her and the baby? Maybe he like, killed it and brought it back. My dad’s second cousin once met this guy whose baby was born all vampy, fangs and all. It ate its way out. Do you think Carol will make it sick or something? If it eats her I mean. She’s bound to give anyone indigestion.”

“Hands?”

“Yeah?”

“Stop talking.”

“Got it.”

When they entered the house, everything was quiet. Too quiet.

Hands even looked uncomfortable. “Noah, maybe we should come b—”

An explosion rocked the house, both young men jumped and covered their heads as dust rained down on them from the ceiling.

“Eureka!” The booming voice shook the walls some more and Noah covered his mouth to keep a very feminine shriek from escaping his throat.

A screech similar to the one he'd stifled rang out beside him and Hands began to jump up and down, frantically batting at his leg where a shiny silver kitten clung viciously, slowly climbing up, tiny needle like teeth gnashing. "Get it off!"

Noah grabbed for the little creature but he quickly felt a sharp pain in his foot. "Ouch Ouch Ouch!"

"Noah! Dude! It's getting really high up man, I don't want to get stabbed in my...shit!"

"Kinda busy Hands!" He tripped on another of the little metal monsters and fell hard, tiny claws ripping through his skin like razor blades. How lame could he be? Death by kitten? Shit!

"Babies! No! No eating the guests!" A shrill, nasally voice ordered. "Guest are not food!"

One of the robotic monsters bit hard on his thigh, but they then begrudgingly shrunk back to their mother's side. Hands fell beside him and they leaned against one another panting heavily and trying not to cry like little girls. "Hi Carol." Noah finally managed.

"Well it's about time! You should take more responsibility for your actions!"

Noah stood and helped Hands up. "They're your fucking doom kittens! Who has robotic kittens?"

"My daddy made them for me and I wasn't talking about my babies, I was talking about yours!"

His eyes slipped to her slightly protruding stomach and he swallowed back nausea. "You're sure it's mine?"

"Are you calling me a slut!"

Hands snickered. "I think he likes the cock more than you do."

"Hands?"

"Yeah?"

"Not helping."

Hands looked stricken. "Maybe you're a six beer straight. I have it on the best scientific authority that six beers drunk fast enough can flip your interest like that. Did you guys drink at all?"

Both of them stared at him.

"Oh yeah," he quickly changed topics. "What's with the eureka moment? Usually those end with explosions."

She made a sour face and shrugged. "Just daddy tinkering with something or other. I think he said something about maple syrup."

“That seems a little tame for him,” Noah worried. “It’s not going to turn us green or give people extra limbs?”

“Or give you the insane urge to hand out religious pamphlets like those guys down the street from you, the ones that always were robes and sing about harry Christians?”

“...It’s Hare Krishna, and what the Hell Hands?”

“What? It was the worst Halloween treat ever! Stuff like that sticks with you,” Hands insisted with a shiver.

“Why do you even bring him here?” Carol grouched.

“Uh...I’m sorry, I’ll take him home.” Noah grabbed Hands by the wrist and pulled him out the door before his...girlfriend/stalker/blackmailer could stop them.

When they were far enough into the woods that surrounded the town, Hands started to laugh.

“What?”

“You bring me there so you have an excuse to leave,” he guessed insightfully.

Noah grinned. “And so I have someone to do afterward.”

Hands licked his lips. “Sweet talk like that’ll get you laid.”

“Promise?”

His friend took hold of Noah’s arms in his large hands and spun him round, easily pinning him to a tree. “Mmm, as long as you promise not to knock me up with your undead spawn. I’d look horrible with a baby belly.” He laughed and bent to lick gently over the gills hidden behind Noah’s ears.

Noah’s cock instantly stood to attention and his legs went weak from the sudden loss of blood. He clutched at the other man’s waist and cried, “God Hands!”

“Well they say idle hands are the devil’s plaything, and there’s that incident up in Newberry where the guy murdered his family in his sleep because his hands were bored so—”

Noah pressed his mouth hard over Hands’, cutting off his rambling. Those long fingers tightened on his arms and Hands pressed hard against him, tongue playing over his like he was trying to coax music out of Noah’s mouth. A thick, insistent bulge pressed against his own, the length and girth of the treat waiting for him obvious even through Hands’ jeans.

He felt dizzy, wonderfully dizzy. Panting into his friend’s mouth and slowly rocking his hips, grinding his need into that wonderful answering hardness.

Then he rocked back and there was something there, a small branch or knot in the tree or something. It was at the perfect height to tease the back of his balls and that delicate area just behind

them. Sparks danced in his vision and he cried out gyrating back and forth between both exquisite sensations.

On the back thrust, he heard a tearing sound and the branch actually tore through his pants. He yelped and pressed forward into Hands. It felt like the tree bit him!

“What...was that your jeans ripping?” Hands backed up from the tree and turned him around to assess the damage. “Woah, you’re bleeding a little bit, it looks like a—”

“A bite mark?” Noah stared at the branch that hadn’t been there before. The one leaking sap like a bark covered dick... a bark covered dick with teeth at the end. “Are you seeing this?”

Hands nodded dumbly against his shoulder.

“You think Carol’s dad...”

“I think we should go someplace without trees now.” Hands whispered fearfully, looking around at all of the maples standing tall around them.

They made their way carefully through the woods and toward the village but the trees were thicker somehow, blocking their way.

“This is like the Pando Forest, man,” Hands whimpered. “thousands of trees but just one root system, they’re like a hive mind. They know everything any one tree knows. One of my cousins told me her friends went there for vacation and never came back. The trees absorbed them into the hive.”

“Hands, that’s an urban legend, it’s impossible!” Noah held on to his slipping disbelief.

“Yeah? Like a maple tree with Peni-Dentata? My mom’s best friend’s cousin’s babysitter had Vagina dentata, there were teeth in her—”

“Pe...Hands, I can’t deal with this right now. Really. Not now.”

“But...”

Noah covered his mouth and shook his head. “Please. We can make it to the lake, if they haven’t cut off that path too. Trees don’t grow in water. If nothing else, Carol will get pissed if I don’t show up for a while and she’ll send a search party out to drag me back.”

“Guess you’re glad she’s a hormonal stalker now huh?” Hands guessed as they ran, hand in hand, through the familiar forest that had never before felt so ominous. “There’s a man eating tree in Madagascar, you know. It eats everything but the teeth, that’s how you know someone got eaten, there are teeth on the ground around it. Do you think these trees—”

“Hands!”

“Shutting up.”

Trees swayed above, roots rose from the ground around the pair, it really was like the whole forest had turned against the two of them. Noah felt hunted. He clung to Hands tight as he could. Reaching branches clung to their clothing as they ran past, the sharp extensions caught in the holes Carol's robot kittens had made and ripped them open even more. The crisp promise of fall wasn't so enjoyable when it was raising gooseflesh on their exposed skin. By the time they'd reached the lake Noah had nothing on but the ragged remnants of his underwear hanging open from the elastic waist like a loin cloth and his hiking boots. Hands had fared a little better His jeans were almost intact.

The sandy area around the lake blessedly had no trees and both men collapsed there, coated in blood from their various scratches and gasping for breath.

"You know that time we had sex in that tree?" Hands panted.

Noah swallowed hard and tried to calm his racing heart. "Yeah?"

"Never again."

Noah's laughter was just this side of hysterical but he felt he'd earned it.

"Noah?"

"Yeah?"

Hands didn't look upset, just...confused, like he'd never thought he'd be uttering the words he was about to say. "I think maybe we're going to die here."

Noah snorted, eyes tearing up a little. "You got that too huh?"

His friend nodded and asked, "did you ever think anything could be stranger than death by killer kitten robots?"

"Hell, with our lives, the kittens would be normal." Noah lay on his back and closed his eyes.

A solid warmth stretched out beside him and Hands chuckled tiredly. "Noah Tremain, this is your life, this is your life on drugs, any questions?"

Noah opened his eyes and stared at the water stretched out before them. "Just one."

"Huh?" Hand's asked.

"Since when can trees swim?" Noah was too tired to move, and Hand's was too worn out to hold him tight enough. The tree branches reached out of the water and clamped down hard on his legs.

"Noah!" Hands cried out as his hold on his friend's arms slipped.

"Stay away from the water!" Noah warned before he was dragged under.

The lake was freezing and all the air instantly left his lungs at the shock of the cold. He'd never been so happy to have the gills he'd inherited from his mother. The tree tightened its hold, more branches joined the first and slowly moved him down to the trunk. Before they got deep enough to mute the light, he saw the heart he and Hands had carved there that summer. "Noah + Hands = hot hot sex", great he'd been captured by a tree he'd scarred, just great.

Half way down the trunk, there was another bump, much like the one he'd been rubbing against before. He cringed and tried to pull away, but the branches held him fast. A thick fluid began to build in the water around him and he realized it was sap. The branches tightened, one on each ankle and one firmly around his waist. They spread his legs wide, new growth entangling him and bending his knees. Noah struggled hard as he could, kicking and bucking, but the tree didn't give in the slightest. It pulled him down sharply. The tattered pieces of his underwear did nothing to protect him from the penetration. He screamed soundlessly, not even a bubble escaping his mouth.

It took him a moment to realize that though he was stuffed with something thicker and deeper than even Hands had ever filled him, he didn't feel the teeth that the other branch had bitten with. The limb impaling him was rounded, the bark rough but not as bad as it could have been. The thick sap that had been spilling out into the water was instead filling him, pumping into him in gooey jets that eased the thing's passage and hit just right to set him to grinding. He knew he was essentially being raped by a tree, that he was too full, injured and alone. But that wonderful sap coated his insides and he wished he could plead. More, fill me more!

He held on to the branches around him, forcing himself down harder, bucking and gyrating so the intruding limb hit just the right spot inside. Mad with the need for it, he wrapped his legs around the trunk and rode the tree's erection for all he was worth. The bark scraped and scratched his tender inner thighs, but he didn't care. Tentatively, another rounded branch brushed against his lips. Mindless in his need, he opened up for it, and suckled on the intruder hard, groaning around the girth of it. It moved deep down his throat. The thick sap filled his mouth and stomach and he moaned, tears joining the water of the lake. It was terrifying and wonderful and he never wanted it to end.

A pressure at the slit of his cock was all the warning he got before a slender branch slipped inside his dick and pulsed there, in and out. It hurt, it burned and pinched and almost broke him out of his pleasure, but then something shifted inside of him, like a switch flipped to light up his insides. He was breached, too full, but in the best of ways. He twisted and pressed and would have begged if he could speak underneath the cold lake's surface. Please please please! Finish it, finish me, take me, own me, fill me up and fuck me raw! The tree shivered and gave one great heave and one last strong jet of the stuff shot into him from every point they were joined. He screamed, vision gone white and then black. He nearly passed out. The branches trembled and withdrew and he felt himself floating alone, and slowly upward even with no air left to make his body buoyant. Idly he wondered if sap floated.

A pair of arms clamped around him. Noah felt himself lifted into the light then into the air, but he was too spent to do more than let himself be dragged up onto the sand.

Hands flopped beside him, gasping for air, alternatively cursing and praising Noah's gills. When he managed to speak in more than a breathy exhalation, Hands sat up and lifted Noah into a sitting position, holding on tight. "You fabulous, wonderful freak you!"

Slowly he began to come to his senses. He raised one weak hand to stroke his worried friend's back and mumbled. "—long was I gone?"

"A couple hours, Noah! You were down there for hours! And those trees are carnivorous! Carol came looking for you and they ate her! They ate Carol! I thought you were dead! How do you feel?"

"Didn't eat me. I ate it."

Hands froze for a moment then pulled back to look into Noah's tired eyes. "What?"

Noah felt punch drunk. "What do they call you if you get off on sex with trees?"

"Arborophile? Insane? You know my grandpa knows a guy who knows an older guy who tried to use maple syrup as lube and got stuck inside his wife, it hardened! I mean could you imagine it? You'd have to be really fucking kinky!"

"Hands?"

"Yeah, Noah?"

"I'm really fucking kinky," he managed.

"Um..."

"You know how we decided not to have sex in a tree again?"

Hands looked worried. "Uhuh."

"We should rethink that plan," he whispered, smiled, and passed into blissful unconsciousness.

Hands held his scraped, bruised and well fucked friend, staring down at Noah's limp body and then out into the forest. He wasn't sure what was going to happen to the two of them when they finally left the beach, but he was starting to look forward to finding out.

Prompts...

- an isolated town for retired Circus performers, who all have deep dark secrets
- one has a girlfriend who is pregnant with an undead baby, but he isn't sure if it's his, especially since he doesn't remember ever being undead...or heterosexual...
- killer kitten robots
- a best friend/sidekick who has an urban legend for every situation
- a science experiment resulting in carnivorous maple trees that can swim!
- least fave Halloween treat - religious pamphlets from the weird family down the street