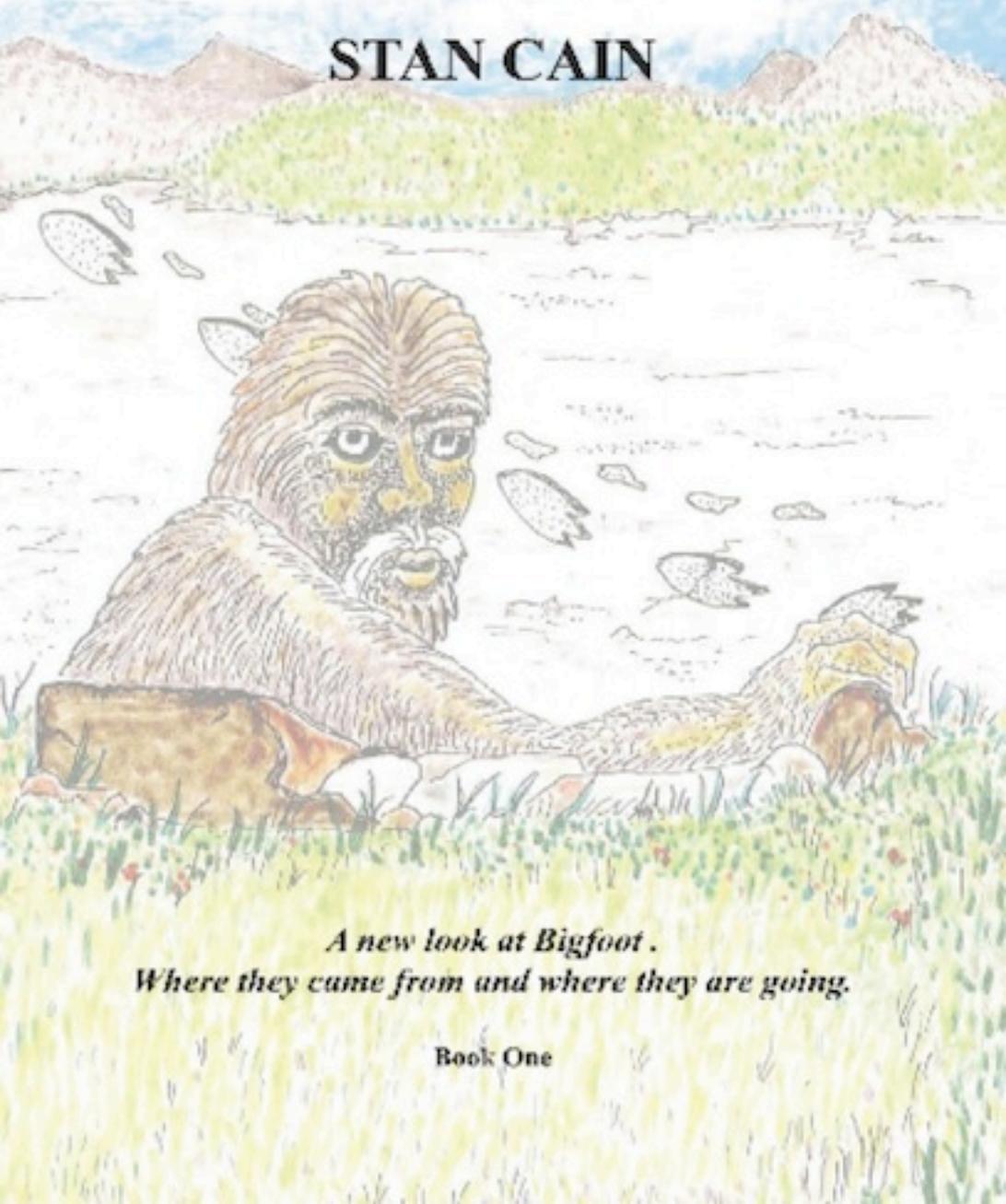


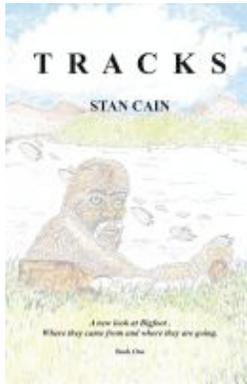
TRACKS

STAN CAIN



*A new look at Bigfoot .
Where they came from and where they are going.*

Book One



Tracks is a story about the adventures of three complete strangers - a recent graduate from college unfamiliar with the ways of the woods, who is also the nephew of a powerful Senator, a college professor somewhat knowledgeable about the creatures they seek, and an ex-Marine. They not only find 'Bigfoot,' but become friendly with them. This encounter will come close to costing one of these men more than the money he has been promised!

Tracks

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TRACKS

PART 1 - THE BEGINNING

(In Search of Bigfoot)

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ISBN 978-1-62646-395-0

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Bradenton, Florida.

Printed in the United States of America.

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BookLocker.com, Inc.
2013

First Edition

CHAPTER 5

On our way to the campfire, Duane's cell phone rings. It's the Senator, wanting to know how we are doing. And he says, "Nobody knows how that family got through. However, I'm told no one else will be in the woods, until further notice."

Then Duane tells him, "Nothing new has happened here, but we think they were in the area two days ago, so they should be fairly close."

The Senator says, "Take care." Then he rings off.

I say to Duane, "I'm not sure they are that close. Cause we still don't know how they move, or how fast they can get from one place to another. They could be over on the other side of the mountain in the morning and be right here by noon, for all we know."

"Have a seat," The Professor says, handing each of us a hot cup of coffee and a sandwich.

I murmur, "Thanks!" We sit and enjoy our sandwich and relax for about a half hour. Then we dig into the field box and find two pairs of knee-high rubber boots. This should keep us safe from the snakes, while climbing up that rock pile. But we will still need our side arms, just in case.

I suggest Ed and Duane take the boots; I will walk between them and that way we should be warned, if we walk into a nest of snakes.

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They don't like the idea and say so. "Maybe one of us should stay in camp? In case anything turns up, like the creatures or some more campers."

Ed suggests, saying, "I think Duane and I should be able to look things over. It shouldn't take more than an hour or two. We'll just to take a look see. I think you can take care of yourself as well as any of us, and should be the one to stay in camp."

I go along with their plan and tell Duane, "Don't forget to keep your cameras rolling; then we can see what you find later." With that, they start down the trail.

While they are gone, I look over the famous field box and find the small refrigerator. It has one cold beer, which I open, and look around for more. I find a case down near the bottom of the box and put six new ones in the small fridge. I check the freezer compartment and find the snake serum. The first-aid kit has needles and cotton balls. I think the Professor will know how to use them. I only hope we won't need to.

I relax by the campfire and start thinking of home. I wonder how Missy is doing with the mumps. I think about how much I would like to have Mandy see the valley below; how we would enjoy walking along that pretty little stream. We used to do all that kind of stuff. Somehow we grew away from what brought us together. So much has happened too fast. I almost forget there still is a world outside of these woods, along with a family I need to take care of.

I start to doze off, when I hear the men returning. They are talking as they come across the clearing. They spot me and come over to where I'm sitting.

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“Well?” I ask.

“Things went smooth,” the Professor replied. “Going up, we saw only a couple of snakes, and believe it or not they slithered off. They could have been in a sort of ‘half alarm’ mode. However, we did find something troubling.”

I ask, “Does it look like they have moved? What is it that’s troubling you?”

Ed answered, “First, I think they plan on coming back, as they have plenty of stores, and all of their fire making tools are still in place. It looks like they might have left in a hurry. Then there’s one other thing that may have caused them to leave.”

“And that is?” I ask.

“We found blood in the cave, near the bottom, or back door. It wasn’t fresh and not a great deal of it. Maybe a small fight with another animal, it looked like, or one of them may have been hurt? However, from what we could see, it is hard to tell just what may have happened.”

Duane interrupted, “I have pictures of it, from all angles.” Then he said, “They may have started to eat meat; it could have come from that?”

Ed corrected, “I find that hard to believe, as the stores we found were still the same as before. And I don’t think they would be eating down there by the door anyway.” Ed goes on, “Something caused them to look after the Blacks. With the Blacks hearing the yell they make, they must have used it to scare away any of the animals that could harm the family.

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Why don't you take a look at Duane's film, while I start something to eat?"

Duane and I head to the tent to take a good look at the laptop.

As Duane starts running his pictures across the screen, I spot something and say, "Can you roll back a few frames?" Then ask, "There, stop!" I request, "Can you blow that up some?"

He punches a couple of buttons, and the picture becomes larger. I can see the rocks that are piled up around the cave. I can see where they must have climbed around on them. Then I see something in the sky that doesn't look good at all. However, it is so far away; it's hard to tell just what it is.

"Can you print this out?" I ask. In a few minutes, he hands me the picture I was concerned about. Then I ask if he has a magnifying glass.

"A small one," he says, digging in his duffle.

With the glass, I can make out what I thought I had seen. It was half a dozen vultures or buzzards, as we called them back home. I ask, "Where were you standing when you took this series of shots?"

"Gosh!" he murmured, "I think these are the ones I took about three-quarters of the way to the bottom door or entrance. Let me go back and check." He runs the pictures backwards, then forwards, and finally says, "That's right; I'm almost to the bottom opening for the cave."

"Which way were you looking?" I ask.

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“These would be looking towards the valley or just a little uphill from there.”

“Good job!” I say and head over to the campfire and Ed. I show him the picture and tell him my thoughts. “It looks like something is dead over in that area. I think if we knew what it was, that might tell us where our friends may have gone, and why.”

“You are right; I think that may have something to do with the blood we found,” the Professor replied, handing the picture back to me.

I ask him if he thinks we have time before dark to check it out.

“Not if we eat, even, then it would be close. And even if it is something hurt, hopefully it’s not one of the creatures. And if it was, they have a way of taking care of themselves. By the looks of the amount of blood we found, whatever it was; I don’t think it could still be alive. Those birds you see could just be waiting for that. Not only that, we shouldn’t be out there after dark. I think tomorrow morning would tell us just as much as now,” he says, and starts dishing up our dinner.

I hate to wait, thinking it might be one of the creatures. However, I do agree with what he says. I try to put it out of my mind; I take a place at the table. I think to myself, tomorrow could be a very interesting day.

We have a great dinner. Again, the Professor may have missed his calling (being a teacher), and I tell him so.

He just laughs and says, “I think I do less harm teaching!”

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We sit around our campfire talking and trying to figure out just what could have caused our three friends to leave the safety of their cave, and all their supplies? But because of how the snakes acted; they may not be too far away. These are the things that are running through my mind when hear the sound of someone talking and come back from my thoughts to the real world.

It's only Duane's asking, "Do you think we could make some kind of sound? You know, to let them know we're here?"

"That's a darn good question young man!" offers the Professor. "What do either of you have in mind? Only, it's my guess, if they're here, they know when anything or anyone comes into this area, or leaves it."

"We could blow our truck horn and turn on the lights!" Duane declared.

"The worst that would do is to scare away all the game in our area. However, I doubt it would bring them back. I'm with the Professor; they know what, and who, comes and goes around here," I announced. "And making all that noise might bring the National Guard running to rescue us. We sure don't need that!"

The Professor adds, "I think our best bet is to check out the area where the buzzards were working. It may be one of the three is hurt? But, I don't think so. There's just too much we don't know. We are only guessing at everything at this point."

I agree with the Professor that we should wait. Then suggest a nice hot cup of coffee, and an early start in the morning.

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"I'll get right on that," the Professor says, heading for the fire where he has the pot hanging.

We spend a little more time sitting around the campfire and finally call it a day. The receiver shows nothing outstanding or any reason to be worried. We all retire for the night and settle in for, hopefully, a good night's sleep.

At first-light, I climb out of my sleeping bag, thinking I will start breakfast for once. However, I'm late again as usual. The Professor has coffee on, and breakfast started. So I take my morning walk around the area; checking the valley, along with the game trails, looking for prints or any sign of visitors during the night. I amble over to Ed's campfire and ask him if he ever goes to sleep?

"I get all I need," he says, handing me a cup of coffee. Then he asks, "How about some pancakes?"

I thank him and as I dig into the stack of pancakes, I hear Duane mumbling to himself as he joins us at the small table.

"What's up? Why all the mumbling," the Professor asks?

"Oh, I wasn't mumbling. I was just saying I can't remember sleeping all night through, like this. Gosh, it seems like I no sooner lay down, then I'm asleep!"

"It's the air my young friend," the Professor laughed.

We finish eating and climb aboard our ATVs and head down the game trail, which leads to the valley, and the area where

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we hope to find some answers. We pull up and stop at the stream. The area we want is on the other side. I ask the others what they think about going ahead on foot or should we be looking for a crossing?

The Professor warned, "I would feel best with the machines; from where the location looked on that picture, it could be a mile or more from the stream."

"I'm in favor of trying to find a crossing, how about you?" I ask Duane.

He reluctantly sighed, "I'm not in favor of walking around down here or anywhere near here, what with those Mega Hogs or whatever they were!"

"That settles it!" I say. "We'll find a place to cross."

We move along the shoreline and soon find an animal trail that crosses the stream. We cross with little or no problem. Once we are moving away from the stream, and finally getting our bearings, we start to wind our way around boulders and large rocks. It isn't long until we find a small clearing with tall grass. We can plainly see the birds are still circling.

I call a halt and say, "Ed, the birds are still in the air, that could mean something is already at the kill, or whatever it is, it's not completely dead. I don't think they will come down until they are sure it's dead!" Then I ask him, "What's the best way to approach the kill?"

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He answers, "Sarg; I'm quite sure you have had more experience than either of us. How would you handle a situation like this?"

"First," I say, "I don't like going into anything blind. From here, I can see the grass is way too tall even to see what has brought the buzzards. However, we really need to see what's out there before we go barging into anything. I don't see anything near enough that we can climb to have a good look."

Duane offers, "I could stand on you guys' shoulders and check it out. I was on the cheerleading squad for a year in college."

The Professor said, "Duane you keep coming up with exceptional ideas. What about it, Sarg? That would, at the very least, let us know what we are heading into."

"I like it," I say. I stand next to my ATV and lock arms with the Professor. Duane steps up on the seat of the other ATV; then up on our shoulders. After wobbling around with his hands on our heads, he finally gets his balance.

Then he says, "Grab my ankles, you guys!"

We do the best we can, what with this being kind of new to us. Then slowly he stands all the way up.

I ask, "Can you tell what's going on?"

He says, "Nothing is moving out there. However, I do see something large and dark laying there in the grass. From here, it looks like it has hair all over it. By the size of it, it could be

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the Big one! But it could be almost anything. We need to get a little closer to tell for sure.”

I ask him to look all around the tree line and see if he can see if anything is in the grass or bushes?

“All clear,” he says.

We decide to move closer with the ATVs. We feel we could move back much faster with them than on foot.

I say to Ed, “I would like you to drive my unit and Duane can handle the other one, while I will walk in the middle of you two. Then I can jump on either of your machines, if something is hidden out there we can’t see.”

I say a quick silent prayer that the thing up ahead is not one of our three creatures. I signal the men to move forward slowly. I take ‘Harry’ out, flip off the safety, and stick it in my belt in front of me. I also take the sniper rifle from off my back, jam a round into the chamber. We are about 15 yards from the object, when I hold up my hands, signaling to go a little slower. They are almost stopped, so I look all around and scan the tree line at the edge of the clearing with the scope on the rifle. As we move forward again, I think I see some movement in the trees. I call a halt and ask, “Have either one of you seen anything moving in the trees?”

The answer I get is no.

Ok, neither one saw anything. I ask them to watch the trees because, if trouble comes, that’s where it will be from; and probably is what has kept the buzzards from landing. As we

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approach the animal, if that is what it really is, I can see it isn't one of the three creatures.

Ed taps my shoulder, smiles, then says, "Look at the size of that thing. What is it?"

"It's a bear," I reply. "However, I have never seen one that big. It's twice as big as a grizzly, and black bears don't get that size."

"What do you think you saw in the trees?" Duane asks.

"I have no idea, just movement," I answer. "Let's look this thing over and see if we can find out what might have killed it?"

We roll it over and can't find any wounds, other than blood coming out of its mouth.

The Professor starts feeling around its head and says, "Its neck has been broken!"

"What in the world could have broken that thing's neck? It would take a lot of strength to do that to something this size. You get three guesses, and the first two don't count," Duane chuckled.

"I'm afraid you're right," I say. "But how did it get *here*? And another thing, it may be smart for *us* to get out of *here*, but first, I want to check out those trees."

With that I bring up the rifle, and with the scope, start scanning the tree line. I look in the area where I first thought I saw movement. I start to move away when, there it is again.

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It's a shadow-like figure that takes a few steps and stops. It appears to be walking upright, like one of the creatures. But then suddenly, lowers itself back onto all fours and starts to move in our direction. I can now plainly see what it is.

"Let's move it," I say. "This one's mate is on its way!"

The Professor says, "I would have liked to check out those woods, but we had better make tracks."

We get on our ATVs and head back up the trail. I tell Duane to keep an eye on that bear, and if it starts running in our direction, to let me know.

He says, "I don't think we have anything to worry about. It stopped by the other one and lay down!"

We cross over the little stream and decide to take a break; while standing next to our machines and looking into the tall grass, checking to make sure nothing is following us.

Ed states, "I'm pretty sure our friends killed that bear and brought it out there to dispose of. You know something that size would start to smell in a few days. However, that still doesn't account for them leaving the cave?"

I suggest, "They may not have left the cave altogether. They may have come down here to look after the Black family." "Then how do you account for the blood in the cave?" Duane asks.

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The Professor says, "I think the bear may have wandered into the cave, looking for food, and when the creatures gave their 'Tarzan' yell, the bear, being so big, paid no attention, and ended up dead. Then they moved it out of sight and smell."

"Well," I add, "we have been here only two days; it took longer than that last time. Maybe if we simply camp, and get footage for Duane, they might show up and invite us to lunch again."

"Ha! Ha!" Duane says. "You saw what they did to that bear!"

I remind him, "You are overlooking the Professor's aura. I think that will work in our favor."

Duane questioned, "They can't see the Professor's aura!"

I disagree saying, "I'm not so sure that they can't see it. If you remember right, it's what has kept him safe every time he has come into these woods. It also kept us safe and critter free before. There is so much we don't know about them. They may feel or see auras like some of us, which would allow them to control most of what goes on around them."

Duane's cell phone rings. He answers and informed us, "It's Uncle Bob." "Yes!" he says. "No, not yet, everything is okay. I'll tell them. Good-bye." He returns the phone to his pocket and says, "No good news on his end. They are still debating whether to make them an endangered species. Oh, he said the Blacks promised they would keep quiet about us and what they saw and heard."

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"Let's head back to camp, have some lunch, and take it easy. Maybe something will come to us, on what to do next," I say and climb aboard my ATV.

The trails are getting pretty well worn, and travel is much easier than our first trip. We arrive at our campsite a little after noon. The Professor still has his old tricks of making a great meal in practically no time. I check the receiver and find nothing has been up or down the game trails since early morning. I walk over to the campfire and give Ed the news and ask him what he thinks about all that has just happened?

He looks up at me and says, "They are back!"

I ask, "They are? How do you know?"

"Look around. What do you see?" he says.

"Well, nothing new," I reply.

"That's why I know they've returned, or at least they were here, while we were down below. And they know we're here."

I asked, "What do think we should do?"

"Act normal. Have lunch and let things work themselves out."

Duane comes out of the tent complaining, "Something seems different? Have you guys noticed it?"

Ed reports, "The three are more than likely near, or at least were here not too long ago."

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“Gosh!” Duane says looking all around. “What are we going to do?”

“Have lunch,” the Professor says, and sits down at our small table. In front of each chair, there is a paper plate, with a large sandwich on each.

We are having a cup of coffee and enjoying lunch when Duane gasped, "Oh, my God!"

I look up and sure enough; he has seen something that only God could help him to understand...all three creatures are slowly walking toward our campfire. Luckily, I have 'Harry' handy. I hope I won't need it. No one moves, but I can hear Duane's uneven breathing. I still have a difficult time getting used to the size of them; along with the fact, they seem to move like humans. Being at least half animal, one would think they would walk kind of bent over, like chimps or apes?

I look at Ed; he has leaned back with one of his special grins. He whispers, “Now the fun begins.”

“Fun,” Duane whispers.

The Small one (the one we think is a young female) runs up to Duane and pushes him off of his camp chair. The Light colored one (the one we think is an adult female) makes a loud wheezing kind of noise. The Small one moves over to her (we also think the Light colored one is the mother), and puts both of her hands up in front of her face.

The Professor stands up and steps away from his chair, pointing to it. The Big one lowers himself, cross-legged to the ground. The others follow suit. The Professor reaches for the

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half loaf of bread still on the table and cuts off three pieces. He hands each one a large slice. The Big one takes the bread and takes a bite. Then he looks at the Professor and makes a noise that sounds like "m-a-n-n-a."

"Manna," I repeat. They understood that word before.

The Professor observed, "That word means something special to them."

I reply, "It could be that word 'Manna' has been handed down through the ages, from their Angel forefathers, letting them know what they ate in Heaven."

Ed says, "That is more than likely the only word they understand."

"They understand all our words," I say.

"What did you say?" the Professor asks.

"I said they understand all of our words."

He looks like someone just slapped him, and he demands, "How could you possibly know that? I don't recall hearing any words, at any time."

"I don't *know*," I admitted. "It *came* to me twice in a row. I didn't *hear* it as much as I *felt* it. It was just *there*, in my *head*."

"This is starting to get real scary," says Duane. "I didn't hear anything."

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The Professor asked, "Can they speak? Like real words?"

"I don't know, but somehow they know what we're thinking."

Then he asks me if I can reach them?

I reply, "I don't know what you mean by reach."

"What do you want to know?" comes into my head. I tell this to Duane, and the Professor.

Then Ed asks, "You actually *heard* words? You're telling us he can speak?"

"I'm not sure *how* it happens. I just *feel* the words in my mind." Then I receive, "There is no need to make sound to understand." I tell the Professor what I just felt.

"Then we really are communicating with them!" Ed proclaimed.

"I think you could say that," I tell him.

"God," the Professor says. "There is so much I want to ask them, I don't know where to start."

"What do you want to know?" I tell him what I just received.

"Let's start with where do they live?" Ed says.

"Here!"

"Here," I repeat.

"How long have they lived here?" Ed asks.

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“Always, all our lives, born here,” I hear in my head.

“They were born here,” I say.

“Where are their parents?” Ed asks.

“Gone,” I hear.

“Gone,” I say.

“Where have they gone,” from Ed?

“Taken,” I hear.

“They were taken,” I repeat.

“This could take forever!” Ed says.

“Have time!”

“Have time,” I relay, “or something like that.”

Then I receive, “Why come back?”

“They want to know why we returned,” I tell the guys.

Ed asks, “Can I speak to them?”

“You already are!”

“You are!” I tell him.

Ed in return says, “We came back to try to do, just what we are doing now. We are here to communicate with you. However, when others find out, all the people around here are

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going to know you exist. Then they will try to come here to see you. What we would like to know is how you will act.”

“We have seen them.”

“They know about people,” I say.

Ed continued, “But once it’s made public, they will come looking for them and probably chase them away from their home.”

“Not well with family!”

“Not well with family!” I repeat.

“What will they do if people come and try to capture them?”

“We live here; we stay here.”

“We live here; we stay here,” I repeat, and then add, “They are going back to the cave.”

When will we see them again,” Ed asks?

“Next sun, you come.”

“Tomorrow he says, and we are invited to lunch; I think.”

The three creatures then stand up and walk back into the woods. They leave us standing there with our mouths hanging open, scratching our heads.

“Wow!” Duane exclaimed. “I got all of that on tape. I didn’t understand most of it, but it’s in the can, so to speak. Do you plan on going back into that cave?”

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“We are,” the Professor say, "at least I am. However, right now, I'm going to bake a cake!" With that said he gets up and heads for the field box.

I just relax and ponder all that has happened these last few hours. It's hard for me to keep all this in its proper place. Even if I have a place for this kind of stuff, I'm not sure my brain has a place for it. But what do I know? I came into this project thinking I had a fair understanding of where these creatures came from, and even a few ideas about how they would act. So up until now, I was doing pretty well. Now, I don't know what to think? I watch the Professor come back from the trailer, with his arms loaded down with a Dutch oven and all kinds of bags and boxes. He drops everything on the small table. Then he starts a big fire and goes to work whipping up something, pouring the contents into the large Dutch oven.

I walk over to the fire and ask, "What are you making?"

“I'm thinking of cornbread,” he says, “with nuts and raisins, and maybe a little brown sugar or honey. What do you think?”

"They ate the bread," I reply. Ed finishes his baking and sets the Dutch oven aside to cool; he then starts our dinner. Not for the first time, I think to myself, what would we do without this guy?

We finish eating; clean our utensils and start talking about what we will do in the morning. What kind of questions to ask? What we should take with. Do we go armed?

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I inform the guys, "I won't go anywhere in these woods unarmed. As for the questions we should ask, I think they are willing to talk, if you can call it that. I can understand most of what they say, so in a way, I guess that could be called talking!"

"Talking, feeling, or just understanding, that's communicating, and isn't that what we came back for?" adds Duane.

The Professor says, "I would like to know about their power? How much they have, and where it comes from? Do they have had any contact with others of their kind? Do they have any teachers, other than their elders?"

I remarked, "I don't know what they are ready to talk about. So far, it seems they are willing to go along. They just might want to keep their thoughts to themselves. Even so, they must have had encounters with other humans besides us. Maybe their forefathers did. Somehow the word 'Manna' has followed them from the beginning. If we can find out the answers to even half of all these questions, I think we'll be very lucky. Well, we will have to wait and see. For now, I'm for a little sleep."

Duane responds, "They might actually know how, and when, all of these Meg Hogs and now Black Bears, started to appear, or if they have always been in these woods. I find it rather strange nobody has reported them before?"

The Professor states, "These woods are rather remote, but people have hunted and camped in some parts of these woods for years. I'm sure if they had wandered into the creatures' area sooner, we would have heard about it. It has been only

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lately that we have been getting reports of 'Bigfoot' sightings, and footprints in this area. It's my guess; the creatures have been near here for quite a long time."

I'm up early again, but still too late to beat the Professor. He has coffee and breakfast already started. I walk over to the edge of the clearing; take another long look at the valley that has kept me dreaming of better days, considerably better situations, and in much better places.

After eating, we tidy up the area, waiting and wondering what to do about our invite to the cave. It's kind of early in the morning; approximately eight thirty. We have no idea how late our friends sleep in, or are they like most animals, up with the sun?

I'm about to take a walk around the area when the Professor alerts us, "Our wait is over!" He points to the tree line. We look and standing in the main game trail is the Small one. She just stands and looks at us.

I respond, "Get your side arms gentlemen; we are about to walk into the lion's den. And Duane, be sure you have enough film to handle most of the day. It could be late before we come back, if we come back. If everyone is ready, let's follow the young lady."

We start walking in her direction. She doesn't move until we are almost up to her. I could swear she, or it, smiled at Duane before slowly turning and walking up the trail.

The Professor asks Duane if he has bought a ring yet.

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“Alright you guys, stop saying things like that. She may understand and get some funny ideas.”

"Oh! She understands alright," I say. "Only she thinks you are young and someone to play with. She has never had a youthful playmate or anyone to play with. She is not at all interested in you for anything sexual. In fact, she is still a baby. However, it's my guess; she is thinking about you much of the time. To her, the Professor and I are adults, and are not to be talked to, or thought about other than to answer questions." I think to myself, kind of like when I was a boy; we were told to speak, only when spoken to.

As we enter the small clearing, just before the huge boulder and rock pile that leads up to the entrance (or front door as we keep calling it), I see the other two sitting outside, in the morning sunshine. We start to move up, stepping, sometimes climbing, from boulder to boulder. The two stand up and start climbing a little higher. At the top, they stop and wait for our arrival. As I top the hill, I see a flat area with large rocks set in a circle. This is not by accident. They must have arranged them as a meeting place, or a family sun room so to speak.

They each pick a rock and sit and wait for us to do the same. After we are settled, the Professor brings out the cake, which he baked for them. He removes the towel he has wrapped around it to keep it fresh. He scratches his head and says, “Would you believe it, I forgot a knife to slice it?”

I have a medium-sized hunting knife on my belt. I take it out and hand it to the Professor. I notice the Big one looking at the knife. He can't seem to keep his eyes off of it. The Professor cuts the cake into large pieces. Once finished

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cutting the cake, he starts to hand the knife back to me. As he does, the Big one reaches out, and takes the knife from the Professors' hand. Then he looks at me, and I feel, "What is this?"

I say, "It's a knife, for cutting, like the sharp stone you have, in your place to eat."

He lays the knife down beside his leg and takes the piece of cornbread the Professor is handing him. He eats the cake in about two bites. Then he looks at the Professor.

The Professor looks at him and asks, "Was it good?"

"Good?" I feel.

"He asked what is good!" I repeat for Ed and Duane.

"Then why is he still looking at me that way?" the Professor asked.

I say, "He asked what the word good means."

Then I feel, "Manna, more."

"Manna more," I explain to Ed.

"Oh! He wants more!" With that, Ed gives him another slice.

The Big one eats it and looks at the Light colored one. She sort of shrugs her shoulders, as much as to say, "BIG DEAL!"

Once the cake is gone, most of it eaten by our friends, Ed asks, "Is this place for a meeting?"

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"Meeting," I hear.

"I don't think he understands that word," I tell Ed.

Then Ed asks, "Do you invite others here to eat, or to talk, or for the family to rest?"

"Family gone," I hear.

"He said that before," I tell Ed. Then I ask the Big one, "You say your family was *taken*. Who *took* them, and how did they *take* them?"

It seems a long time before I feel anything. Then I start to think; I may be asking things better left alone. It isn't too long before, I feel him start to tell me what I want to know. It is not easily understood, even to them, what they have learned from their elders and what they are supposed to teach to their young. I feel he can't put into words what I'm asking. Maybe 'taken' to us is much different than to them? I keep receiving something that sounds like 'things'.

I ask, "What '*things*' are you talking about?"

"Not sure," comes on strong.

I ask, "Can you tell us what you *felt*, or what you *saw*, when your elders or your Mother and Father were taken?"

"You can't see *taken*."

I tell Ed and Duane what I am receiving (or at least what is clear). Some of the thoughts are all mixed up. It may be kind of like you had to be there!

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The Professor looks at the Big one and says, "Can you tell what you saw when your parents were taken?"

Again, I feel him mulling it all over in his mind. It comes to me in bits and pieces. Finally, I hear, or feel strongly, the words, "at first, the *bad* were taken." Next comes softly, "We *try* to make *right*." After that comes, "We have *learned* and we *teach* our young; it has always been that way." Afterwards he points at me, and I get, "No more you tell."

I tell Ed, "I think that's all we are going to get on this subject. However, I think he wants to know what happened to our parents, when they are taken?"

Ed says, "Maybe you should try to answer that. You probably know more about the Bible than either of us."

"I'll try," I say, as I look at all three creatures, each one in turn. Then I say, "We are mortal. God made us flesh, from the dust of the ground. And He put a thing called a 'soul' inside each of us. When we grow old or are killed, our soul, or spirit, will return to God. Then our body is put into the ground, so it can return to dust. Do you know about God?"

"Father," I hear.

I hear this so loud, it hurts my head. After my ears clear, I tell the Professor about how the answer came back, "Just the word 'father'."

Ed asked, "He said father?"

"Yes," I say, "loud and clear!"

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Then Ed asks, "Can he tell us anything about any others of his kind?"

The Big one has a frown on his face, like he either doesn't understand, or doesn't want to talk about it.

I ask, "You don't want to say anything about others?"

"*Others* not same," I hear.

"He says the others are not like them," I tell Ed and Duane.

"Can he tell us how?" Ed asks.

Again, I feel he does understand Ed's question, but is trying to come up with the right words. This process that keeps going on between the two of us, is really hard to explain; there are times I get a real plain word, and at other times, a hunch or afterthought. I try telling this to Ed and Duane. However, by the look on their faces, I don't think I have gotten through to either of them.

Then I say, "What I get from the Big one is the others have not listened to the elders. They have taken mates of other kinds, and are not pure, or clean. He is having a difficult time putting some of this together; really having a hard time trying to tell us, so we can understand."

The Professor asks, "Can he tell us if he has seen any of them, the other ones?"

"Long time ago," I hear.

I repeat this.

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Then Ed asks, "Are others taken?"

Before Ed can finish, I receive, "*All* will be taken."

I get that part very clear, but much more is not clear. He is not sure if the others are still somewhat like them or have mixed enough to be *banned*. I get the word 'banned' and ask him what 'banned' means?

This again, I think he understands, but is having trouble explaining to us. Finally, I get "taken but not rise." This almost floors me and I'm not sure I can explain just what it is he is telling us?

"Look," I say to Duane and the Professor, "do you remember the paintings we saw in the cave?"

"Yes," they say together.

"Well the words I get really clear are 'taken, but not rise.' From this I think he means all are taken. This could mean; all die. However, some may not go to the same place. If you remember, I think I told you about the gulf in heaven? This just might be the same thing."

After I say all of this, he smiles and nods his huge head. "I think I said something he couldn't put into words. And I think those paintings were of them rising. Here again, we may be reaching for straws; just so we can come up with the answers we like."

The Professor happily says, "We are getting a treasure chest full of information. Are you getting all of this?" he asks

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Duane. Then Ed asks me, "Do you think you could find out anything about the power they have?"

The Big one must have heard this, because I get, "What is power?"

"He wants to know what power is." I tell Ed.

"Oh! Yes!" he exclaimed. "Power probably doesn't mean anything to them?" Then Ed asks, while looking at the Big one, "How can you control the animals?"

"Control," I hear.

"He doesn't know that word," I say.

Ed says, "When you make a great noise, is that what makes the other animals go away? And sometimes come back?"

"Tell to go, tell to come."

I pass this along.

Ed asked, "The big bear, in the meadow down below, what happened?"

All of these questions seem to bother him. I don't feel he is really unhappy, but can't seem to find the right words. However, I also get the feeling that he is happy to try to answer them. I get the feeling that they have been alone for a long time and may even be enjoying our questions, along with our company and of course, the cake.

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After dropping his head, for a moment, he looks at the little or Small one, and I receive, "Try hurt young!" Then, something I feel he doesn't really want to talk about; it seems the bear came into their home and was looking for food. It came near the young one, and he stopped it. Then they put it in the meadow. I think that's what took place.

I tell Ed this and he inquired, "He called her young? Not daughter, or baby, just young. That's strange. What happened with the bear is more than likely what we thought. There is so much more to know about these three." Then he asks, "How do they understand what we are saying?"

"Saying in head," I hear.

I tell Ed that. He responds, "They know what we are thinking? Good heavens, I can't control all of my thoughts. What if we seem scared or don't like their looks?"

I answer Ed, "I get from the Big one, pretty much what means, 'not all thinking', just questions and very bad feelings. So you better watch what you think."

I look up and notice we have been here for quite some time, as the sun has moved across the trees, and we are now sitting in the shade. I motion to Ed and say, "I think we'd better start to call this meeting to an end. They may have other things to do."

"We eat," I feel from the Big one and for the first time I'm receiving something from the Light colored one, at least that's where I think it's coming from.

"You have manna."

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I say to the other two, "It looks like we are here for lunch again."

We all make our way down to the entrance and move along the passageways leading to what we have been calling the eating room. We are called to a halt, next to the paintings we saw last time.

The Big one stands in front of it and sends, "Taken."

The Professor offers, "I guess this is what they mean by taken."

I agree, "It explains a lot. I wonder if these paintings are showing them going up. And it looks like the whole body is going up. If this is what happens, that could be why no remains are found."

We continue moving on, until we are in what I call the eating room. The Light colored one starts to grind meal and wild onions. The Big one starts a fire. It takes less than 3 minutes to have a good flame going. He has tinder, small twigs, tree bark, and some larger pieces of wood lying in the area in neat piles. I notice he has laid my knife next to the mixing or grinding stone. The Small one brings nuts and berries in the gourd-like bowls and sets them in front of us.

While we are cracking and eating nuts, the Light colored one has mixed and rounded a lump of dough. She patted it out on the flat stone that is over one end of the fire pit. We receive a gourd full of water from the Small one. Again, we are shown how to scrape the nut shells into the fire pit, along with a look that says, 'we keep a clean ship here.' After we are almost

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done eating nuts, the Professor asks the Big one, “Would it be all right if he asked more questions?”

He nods his head in Ed’s direction and then Ed says, “You never told us how you move so fast, from one place to another or how you healed Duane’s ribs?” The Professor points at Duane and next at his ribs.

The Big one again ponders the question, trying to give us an answer we can at least understand. All of this I get piecemeal – a little at a time. Then in time I feel, “Use old one’s spirit.”

This I tell Ed and remark, “That is what my theory has been from the get go!”

“So,” Ed says, “he is telling us that they have some of the power of the Angels.”

I say, “What I think he is trying to say is the power is *spirit*, not *from* the Angels but *like* the Angels. I’m not actually sure if what I’m telling you is even close to what he is trying to explain to us. I could be jumbling it all up!” Then I receive, “You tell right.”

While we are going through all this, back and forth, the Light colored one has taken the ‘manna’ off of the baking stone and is starting to tear it apart. I hear a very loud *wheezing* sound. Then she picks up the knife by her and looks at Ed.

I say, “She wants you to show her how to use it.”

Ed asks, “What was that wheezing noise we heard?”

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I tell him, "I think it was the Big one telling her to use the knife."

Ed gets up and moves around the fire pit; takes her right hand and places the knife in her hand, handle first. Then he takes her wrist and places her hand over the 'manna' and he presses down. The knife cuts through the 'manna, nice and clean. Then she takes the knife and does the same. When it is all cut, she looks up and smiles.

We eat without any more talking, if we can call it that.

The Professor advised us, "We had better be getting back to camp and let Uncle Bob know we have found them; and that we are trying to communicate with them."

I give Ed a nod and say to the Big one, "We must go."

The Big one nods, but stays sitting. He looks at the Small one, who gets to her feet and starts walking down the passageway. After a few steps, she turns and looks at us. We get up and follow her out of the cave.

I look the rock pile over, making sure no snakes are out sunning themselves, and I receive, "They have gone."

"The snakes are gone," I tell the others.

"She told you that?" Duane asks.

"After a fashion," I say. I nod to her, and we start down the mountain of boulders. We soon reach the meadow, at the base

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of the rock pile. We cross the meadow and find our game trail that will take us back to our campsite.

Things look untouched back at camp, and we decide to call in and see if the Senator has any more news about protecting the three creatures. Duane gets a hold of his Uncle, and the Professor asks if he has any news? The answer is he is still working on it. He wants to know how things are going. We tell him everything that has gone on between us and the three.

As the Professor is about to end the call, Duane enters the tent, hollering, "There is a chopper coming over our campsite!"

Ed tells the Senator, "Hold on, we have a problem here."

We step outside and see a helicopter circling the area.

Ed runs back inside and shouts, "Robert, what are you up to?"

"I don't know what you mean, 'up to'," he responds.

"There's a chopper flying over our campsite!"

"It's not one of ours," he bellowed. "Can you get a number or anything off of it?"

Duane sticks his head in and says, "It looks like a news chopper."

Ed passes this along to the Senator.

In return, he says, "I'll get right on it. You guys just sit tight."

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I look it over but can't find any call letters, numbers, or logos, there's nothing at all on the doors. It has always been my understanding that all planes and choppers must have an identification number of some kind.

Ed comes out of the tent and asks, "Can you tell who it is?"

I answer, "It has no markings that I can see."

Duane remarks, "It looks like its leaving."

"Yes it does, but why was it here in the first place? I don't know what any of this can mean or what trouble it can cause the creatures. However, I don't think any good can come from it. I'm sure the creatures must have seen or at the very least heard that thing."

The Professor says, "Let's hope for the best. In the meantime, I'll start dinner, if you guys will gather a little fire wood."

I bring a couple armloads of dead falls, set them down, and ask Ed, "What do you think will happen if people start streaming into the woods looking for Bigfoot - trying to take pictures, maybe even try to capture one of them?"

He quipped, "I don't know what you thought about the answer the Big one gave when he said, 'we live here,' but I took that to mean they will defend their homeland. After looking at that bear and what happened to it, I wouldn't want them against me!"

I reply, "I feel it coming. I can't put my finger on it, but something in my gut tells me that chopper is just the start of something we aren't going to like."

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Ed then asks, "Do you think we could get them to move?"

I answer, "Move where? This is their home. You heard the Big one. What the heck, that chopper can follow anybody, anywhere. When people come - and they will, I don't know when, but it will happen, and when that does happen, I'm sure they will fight, and that could get really ugly very fast."

"What can we do?" Ed asks.

"I was just about to ask you the same thing."

"Let's have something to eat, get a good nights' sleep, and check with the three, the first thing, in the morning," the Professor suggests.

"Will there be trouble?" Duane asks.

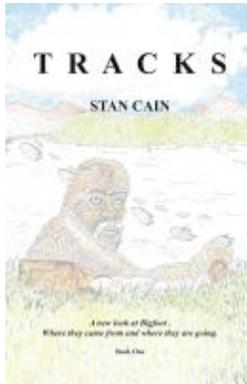
"We sure hope not, but you know people - they can't all be stopped. Some will get through the road blocks. The Blacks are proof of that. They may come by air, like we saw a little while ago. No good can come from any of this," I announce as I reach for the drink Ed is handing me. Then I say, "I thank you my friend; this may not be the answer, but for now, it sure looks good." Although I'm not a hard liquor guy, I do have a beer fairly often. However, in the fix we may be in, Ed's answer may help - at least for tonight.

We do have our evening meal without any further talk about what to do. I, myself, feel we have just started to understand the three. I also feel these three are not what most people have sighted, or caught on film; even if that one documentary I had seen was on the up and up, with the castings of footprints that seems to be the same, mostly very large.

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Although, the three we have seen are very large. The Small one is as big as Duane, but what I get from her is she is still a baby. The Big one called her "young." I wonder how old they are and how old their parents were when they died. Or were taken?

These are some of the things I hope I have time to ask the Big one. He seems to know what goes on in our minds. That is a fact! However, what I would like to find out is how they understand our words, or our language. How they can translate all our thoughts to the proper language of anyone they come into contact with? I think they are, or were, in more countries than ours. Alternatively, it just could be they know all languages from the start. I can't overlook the book of Acts, Chapter 2, and Verse 2. That may be the answer. If things can hold together long enough, I may get a chance to find out. I finish the drink, head for our tent and my sleeping bag. After checking the receiver, I crawl in and, after some time tossing and turning, I finally fall asleep. I have a peaceful night with no dreams of the future, which sometimes follow a mixed-up day like the one today.



Tracks is a story about the adventures of three complete strangers - a recent graduate from college unfamiliar with the ways of the woods, who is also the nephew of a powerful Senator, a college professor somewhat knowledgeable about the creatures they seek, and an ex-Marine. They not only find 'Bigfoot,' but become friendly with them. This encounter will come close to costing one of these men more than the money he has been promised!

Tracks

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