

To Explain the Sasquatch Sitter

by Tantra Bensko

Hi, there,

I know you probably feel this is not the usual way of going about things. I know it probably does not fit with the usual paper work. But you have to understand that I had no choice, really, but to think outside the box. There was just no one other than me to take care of my father. If I was a healthy girl, a pretty girl, someone who could get a husband, that would be different. But that's not who I am, and God has dealt the hand He saw fit. There must be some reason for me to exist. Maybe it's because I have a lot of love to offer.

And I love Betty Lou. The Sasquatch. If you could only know her the way I know her, you would, too. My heart is big. It is filled to the edges with love for her. That's not to say I don't feel love for Papa, too. That's why I wanted her to take care of him. That's how it all happened.

There just isn't much of anyone out here to marry, especially in my condition. No one has ever proposed. If they did, I would probably say No anyway. I do know what love is like, though. I love Betty Lou. And she loves me. I don't mean it in any weird way. Just plain friendship. I would defend her to the death. And if anyone reading this harms her, I will haunt you from my grave.

We wondered for about 8 years what was going on in the woods. Along the creek trail that Marlon Eddie built, there was that Zone. Weird things happened there. Strange sounds. Smells. The dogs went crazy. I felt a little left out that it was only him that heard it. Never me. I mean, I thought if anyone could hear the other worlds, why not me? I love ghosts. Or, I would like to, if any of them

presented themselves to me. I am the kind of person ready for love.

But not for football. Not for basketball. Not for TV. Not for bake sales. Not for church. Not for any of those normal things that people do to get together. Ice Cream Socials. I'm more about hugging plants, petting trees, talking with animals. I had a baby I loved, but she died. I had a boyfriend I loved, but he learned a lot more about life than I had a chance to do. He got an education. He moved to Atlanta. And that was the last I ever heard from him. I don't think I'll ever meet anyone out here that would want to marry me. Would want to help out with Papa.

So, there I was, all alone. I can't lift him. My muscles give out when I try. And then I have to crumple down on the floor afterwards and just recuperate. So when I heard that Sasquatch calling, you can imagine what came to mind. Home health. Pure and simple. Not to mention, Love. I don't mean anything bad. I don't mean the kind of thing you find on the news. I didn't mean to molest the Sasquatch. Love takes many forms. Love is big. And my heart is big. Just, my muscles are small.

The sound wasn't like anything I had ever heard. I thought at first it was something like demons in the air, witches going around on broomsticks. Maybe some TV show at Marlon Eddie's house that was turned up loud. Maybe some party that was being interrupted by the police. I turned right around and walked back the way I came on that trail by the creek. I didn't get too scared. But I didn't want to take any chances. I just tried to forget about it.

But the world is full of coincidences. That's what makes me believe in God. God is coincidences. Cause a friend from the internet told me about Sasquatches that week, and had a tape she had made out in Tennessee when she went out there to visit her niece. I know you may think it's a little risqué to be on the internet. I don't really know anyone who is except for Marlon Eddie's teen age son. Teenagers seem to be kind of up on that sort of thing. But I learned

how to go to the library and use it, find what I wanted to find, when I was trying to get medicines for Papa.

Lordy, the side effects are awful. They made him hallucinate worse than he was anyway, after that stroke of his. I learned a lot about looking up things I wanted to find, at that library, on the computers. And I started writing back and forth to that friend, Katie, because of the stroke group. Her mother had a stroke, and was hallucinating. So we just got to be friends through that. And she went to Tennessee, and had her Experience.

She saw something that looked like an orangutan. And it made the strangest sound she had ever heard. She went back again the next day with a tape recorder. She didn't find it, but she found more signs of it. And she kept going back, while she was visiting her niece. And one day, she saw it again, and taped the sound it made. You would think it was demons. It was the biggest thing that happened in her life, probably. And she told me about that sound when I told her what I had heard. She sent me the tape by mail. And that was it. I was so glad it wasn't demons. I was so glad it was just something that had fur.

I always loved the big monkey type things in the Huntsville zoo. I wanted to let them go. One time, one put her hand out through the bars, and kind of cried. I cried too. I couldn't go back any more. It broke my heart. I couldn't stand to think of her being trapped in there.

And gosh, what would happen if someone found a Sasquatch around here? They would shoot it with a rifle before anything else. They would want to cook it for dinner, stuff it, just cause it was big, before they even got a good look at it. I wanted to find it before any one else did. I wanted to protect it. I wanted to love it. My heart was full. It was ready to flow. It was ready to love.

And when I found her, she was stuck in the brambles. She would have climbed the tree if she could, to get away from me. I would probably never have seen her, if she hadn't been caught. The sound she made was amazing. Not like any animal, or human, you could imagine. More like a siren from outer space. Like some sort of nightmare. And then she let off the most horrible stench when I got close. Ugh. But there she was, caught. And who would untangle her if not me?

I had to cross the creek to do it, and I got soaked all the way up to my chest. But who cares? She was hurt. And I was able to save her. And she looked at me with those big eyes. The brambles were far enough away from her that I could bite them in two. I mean, they went all around her, but I could get to the place the brambles started, bite them, and she could start detangling the rest of it.

I know whoever is reading this might not believe in Sasquatch. I think they are not in the history books, are they? People don't read about them in school. But just look into how many sightings there have been just in Alabama alone. How many recordings there are. How many through history. It's not just me, I swear. I'm not dumb. I'm not crazy. I'm just kind of different. I know my voice sounds a little strange. But it did let me learn the Sasquatch language better.

Did you ever check into the Sasquatch sounds on the Internet? They tell what each sound means, and if you have speakers on the computer, you can listen to how they sound when they are warning other ones of someone coming close. Things like that. It's a science, I guess. I studied it. I can teach you if you want, how to let other Sasquatches know something dangerous is afoot. The sad thing is, I did that, and no other Sasquatches answered back. She was the only one around here.

So, the Sasquatch was really happy I let her go, and didn't hurt her. She was bigger than me, but she seemed really gentle. Kind of

scared of me, more than wanting to hurt me. She looked at me a bunch of times in the way that the pupils of the eyes get bigger. You know what I mean? I felt like she liked me already.

But she left, and I didn't want to stop her. But she turned around and looked at me. And I said bye. I waved. I didn't want her to go away. So I lay down on the ground, even though it was wet. And I rolled upside down. And I made a kind of sound that I thought might mean something like Please come back. Please be my friend. Kind of a grunt. A desperate grunt. I loved her right off the bat. A big person looking thing, but with more hair, darker, kind of bent over. But I don't know. I just don't feel much connection with the other people around here. It's really just me and Papa. And I get so lonely. I get so darned alone. I get really frustrated with him, sometimes. I wish there was someone I could talk to. Could curl up next to. Go to sleep in his arms and just forget about things for awhile.

I don't know if this is the kind of thing you want to hear about. But it's the way it is. So if you read this after I die, or after I am put in jail, or something, maybe you can understand. It probably isn't the kind of official document you're used to. But I do plan on getting it signed. I don't know what you call it. By someone official.

Papa was never the same after his stroke. I don't know if it was the stroke, or the medicines they put him on. But he started hallucinating. Seeing all kinds of things that weren't there. He never even used to see things like that when he had dreams. He never messed around with the dream world, or the subconscious sort of thing that most people get when they dream. If they didn't tell him something, he didn't want to know. He wasn't interested. Straight up, or on the rocks. No mixers. That was his policy. Predictions. Things he should do.

But no funny biz. And that all flooded in on him after all those 60 years when he had his stroke. While he was awake, he would reach

out to touch is hallucinations. People doing weird things all around him. People watering roses. People bringing him food. He would reach out to pet the woman giving him the roses. He didn't try to smell the roses, like I would have done. He's kind of basic. Food. Butts.

We moved here when Mama wanted to be near her brother, but then he died. And we don't have any relatives here. Sometimes, I think my mother wasn't really from here. Sometimes I think she was a fairy or something. Cause I just don't fit in. I just feel more like I could take off into a dream world and never come back. I could just fly away when no one was looking, and find some other world that no one here ever even imagined. I don't care for TV. I don't care for the big chain stores. I like to go to Unclaimed Baggage, and find clothes that were lost on trains and plans from people traveling around.

People not from here. And books from people from other places. People from around here just don't make sense to me. It's all too cut and dried. It's all too straight forward. I like dreams. I like the kinds of things you see when you aren't yet asleep, but have your eyes closed, taking a break from medicine charts and hard lines and edges and keeping track of bills and numbers, and you can see all sorts of things, and know they aren't real, know you aren't dreaming yet, but you're sort of dreaming awake. That's the world I want to go into. That's what I want to go into when I die. That's the world I want to just live in with someone. Just lie there and be part of that world. But I don't think any husband type man would want to lie there with me and go into that world together.

But somehow, it seemed like the Sasquatch lived that world. It was a kind of relaxation I felt around her. A delicious kind of just sinking into that world, where colors were beautiful, there weren't any deadlines, there was some sort of magical excitement. I don't know. Some sort of thing like strange movies, dreams, birthday cakes with lots of icing with lots of colors to it and little people made

out of icing that sat on top. Maybe that's wedding cake. With little brides and grooms. That sort of thing. Fantasy land. The kind of thing that makes you smile. That makes you warm. No numbers on pill bottles and checks, or charts or keeping track of medicines by the hour that if you don't get it right could kill your Papa. No driving around finding new places. No bills that if you miss them would make the electricity get cut off Just a kind of thing that felt more warm. Like childhood. I don't know. Maybe like being hypnotized?

And when I went back into the woods, a few days later, there she was. I think she had been waiting for me. I think she wanted to see me as much as I wanted to see her. Maybe she didn't have any relative either. Papa didn't believe in over populating. Maybe she didn't either. Or maybe someone shot her relatives. People are big on rifles around here. I wanted to protect her. Maybe it's some sort of maternal instinct. But I didn't want anyone to find her. My heart was full. I wanted to love her. I lay down on the ground and rolled on my back and put out my arms. No threat. Love. Hug. Be mine.

And she sort of whimpered. She looked at me and looked away. I think she wanted to trust me. But was afraid to. I think she'd been hurt before. I think she was of two minds. And yes, I do believe they have minds, just like you or me. I think that's what we started out as. And I think something went wrong. Something interfered. Some kind of aliens in history or something. Cause if we'd stayed like her, we would have been really good to the earth. I love the earth.

She loves the earth. But it seems like most people don't. It's like they've been bred with something that must not care about this earth, cause they're sure as heck destroying it like there was no tomorrow. They want to make things out of plastic. Kid's toys. Kid's rifles out of plastic. If no one ever had wars or plastic or too many kids, the earth would be happier. I can feel it when I hug the earth. I don't if everyone does that. Probably not. So you might know what I

mean. Just lie down on it, maybe on a big rock, warm in the sunshine, and feel your heart flow out to it.

And that's what I wanted to do with her. And I could tell that's what she wanted to do with me. So we just turned away from each other, and sat down a long way away from each other, but where we could see each other, just barely, we looked around. And we sat there a long time, lay down, tried to sleep. And I was going into the visions you get before you go to sleep. And I heard her moan. It was so beautiful. I moaned back. And she moaned again. And I did too. We pretended I guess that we didn't hear each other. That we were moaning in our sleep.

And I started feeling all the loneliness of my whole life well up in my heart. I never got to really have a real and true boyfriend. I never got to hug my parents. I never got to feel like anyone really loved me for who I was. No one appreciated me for exactly who I was without comparing me to what they wanted me to be. And my heart felt so heavy, like it was going to explode, to spill over onto the ground.

And I wailed. And she wailed. And I wailed louder. And hearing her wail was the most beautiful thing I had ever heard. I knew she felt the same way. I mean, how many Sasquatches are there in the world? I had never seen one before in my life. I had read about them. That was it. They didn't even have a book about them at the library. Just from Unclaimed Baggage. They said the Hopi's thought they were not just stuck in this dimension. They could move back and forth. They would appear to just the right people at the right time. I don't exactly know what a dimension is. But I didn't care. I wanted to hug her. And if she wasn't from this world, where there were chain stores, and plastic, and TV, and TV dinners, and endless little red pills for strokes with long lists of side effects, and cars that ran over deer and raccoons and possums, and big signs advertising

cokes and things, then I wasn't from this word either. I wanted to hug her so much that all that disappeared.

And I don't know what she felt. Cause she probably didn't know about any of that stuff. But she sounded like a group of sirens all at once. Sirens that were breaking up a party. I mean, she sounded like the party and the sirens all at once. I was smitten. I wanted her for myself. I knew she was the answer to my problems. And I knew I was the answer to hers. But what to do? If I ran over to her, she'd run away.

So I lay down and sort of shuffled on my back toward her. Like some of those disgusting little dogs you see at family gatherings, sliding along the floor cause they have parasites. But I was on my back, even doggier than dogs. But I didn't care. I wanted her to live with me. To hug me. To take me into the world beyond this world. To help take care of Papa. To look in my eyes, with her dark brown eyes, and see God together.

And so, that's what happened. It did. My dreams came true. I just told Papa she was a hallucination. I just told him, "You know how the people around here are. They don't talk very well. They don't exactly enunciate, do they? Her name is Betty Lou. I found her in the paper. She advertised for sitting for the elderly. She's really strong. Way stronger than me."

"But she looks like an ape!"

"*What?* She's really beautiful! She's just big bones. You know how people around here are kind of hairy. She takes that same kind of medicine you take. The Minoxodil. You know how it says on ointment that if you get some on your sheets it will transfer to your body, and make you grow hair? Well that happened to her. She was going bald and just got some of that ointment on her sheets. And you know

some of those other medicines make you hallucinate worse. But you have to keep taking them, the doctor said.”

“But I can't understand a word she says! Her accent is terrible!”

“How many people around here can you understand? It's like they have gravel in their mouths.”

“She still looks like a monkey. I don't think I'd have any fun flirting with her at all.”

“Well, you had better take some more of that hallucination medicine. You know you've been seeing things more lately than ever. What about that plate of food floating on the ceiling you reached out for this morning. You know you can't believe what you think you're seeing.”

“Anna Sue is supposed to come by today.”

“Well, you know, we need to send Betty Lou out for awhile. See if she can find your better blood pressure monitor in the barn.”

“She hasn't been able to find it the last... five or ten times.”

“But now it's lighter outside. Maybe this time she can. In the meantime, we can use this one. Maybe we should send her out to look for a light bulb for the barn.”

“Do we have a barn?”

“Here, hold out your arm. It's time to take this before it's too late. It's already 2 o'clock.”

I hate to do that kind of thing. I'm not the lying type. I am so honest, no one ever played with me in school. I was the good girl. No

one liked that. I tried to do the right thing by my folks. But Papa needs someone. And everyone we tried to get to come out was just not right. Betty Lou is right. She doesn't steal. She doesn't talk drivel. She doesn't try to marry him for his money. She is strong enough to lift him up off the toilet. She makes me happy. I know he doesn't think about that part. Me being happy. But if I'm not, I get sicker. And so he'd better start thinking about that. That's what my friend from the stroke group says.

So, I just want to keep this on record. It's my story. It's the only thing that will last about my life. No one else will remember me, probably, for anything else I ever did. But I know this will get into the papers once this gets out. And I'll end up in jail for lying. Cause I just told everyone that Papa was hallucinating a big orangutan. And so eventually, they came and took him and put him away. And I had no way to live without him paying for me. So I had to go scrounging from dumpsters. Betty Lou started eating the neighbor dogs, I guess. I tried not to think about what she was doing for food, too much. Cause I was afraid something like that might happen. I love dogs. The neighbor ones were all about tearing people up, though. Guarding the meth labs. Doberman Pincers. I think one would probably last a long time for a Sasquatch. It was when I got caught that I started worrying. I wasn't doing anything wrong. Just what anyone would do without any money, and with a hungry Sasquatch to feed. Keeping her quiet so no one killed her. We didn't want the ranging about any more than we had to, did we? Who knows who would have shot her?

The people at the nursing home Papa was kept at didn't need their pudding anyway. I would sell them the combination to open the door to get out of the nursing home in exchange for their pudding. Betty Lou loved pudding more than anything else. But whatever they had, they would gladly give up.

I didn't think it was that bad. They would wheel their wheel chairs out the door with such big smiles. Smiles that didn't move and change in the normal way. But they were happy in some way that I could sort of understand. Getting out of the world they were stuck in for just a little. Freedom. The chance for adventure.

I knew they would get caught before anything bad happened and put back in their rooms. And forget about it by the next day. Probably lose weight and be healthier without pudding anyway. Well, yes, that one woman that I let out got killed on the road. And Betty Lou did eat her. But she was pretty much dead anyway. And she had no reason to live even if she hadn't been hit. And Betty Lou could store up the fat for a long, long time from that. That woman was about to die before she left. It was only those medicines keeping her alive. The medicines in her did make Betty Lou hallucinate from eating her. She did start going kind of wild. That was what made her get out of hand and run into the nursing home screaming like a Banshee.

I know that did start a riot. But what can you expect? She needs to eat too. If they hadn't given that woman all those ridiculous medicines, it would have been OK. She didn't kill anyone. That woman was roadkill. I just thought Betty Lou would stay in the car, sort of hunkered down. But she has instincts like anyone else. And those medicines made her go crazy. She never would have done that otherwise. She was really a good...person. Animal. Whatever. She still is. Sort of in between, I guess. You know.

If I could just go look for her, I think I could find her. If she gets found in the woods, she will go crazy if someone puts her away. I think most likely, someone would shoot her. I need to be let out. Please let me go find her. Please. She never hurt anyone. That woman was dead. She would have died in a few days anyway. If you can just let me out, I can find her, and feed her again, if I can get some sort of job to pay for it. Papa used to always give me money

before he was put away. If I could just get access to the money he had in the bank. If I could just do what makes sense to do. Please don't kill her. Please don't. Please.

