

*Jim Henson's*TM

THE STORYTELLERTM

Witches

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THE MAGIC SWAN GOOSE & THE LORD OF THE FOREST

Written & Illustrated by
S.M. Vidaurri

THE SNOW WITCH

Written & Illustrated by
Kyla Vanderklugt

THE PHANTOM ISLE

Written & Illustrated by
Matthew Dow Smith

VASILISSA THE BEAUTIFUL

Based on the unproduced *The Storyteller* teleplay written by
Susan Kodicek and Anne Mountfield and revised by *Anthony Minghella*

Adapted & Illustrated by
Jeff Stokely

Colored by
John Rauch

Lettered by
Ed Dukeshire



SO FEW
VENTURED
INTO THE
FOREST
THAT FEW,
IF ANY,
EVER SAW
THE

LORD

AND HE HAD BEGUN
TO LIVE ONLY IN

MYTHS.
SINCE
THAT TIME,
THE FOREST
HAD GROWN

DARK

AND MORE AND MORE
THE TOWNSFOLK BEGAN TO
WONDER IF THAT SAD, BEAUTIFUL,
LONELY VOICE WAS EVEN

THE
PEOPLE
WERE MORE
SCARED OF IT
THAN EVER.
THEY DID NOT
TRUST HOW THE
SWAYING
BRANCHES
PLAYED TRICKS
ON THEIR EYES.

HOW THE WIND
CARRIED
THEIR SONGS UNTIL
THEY FELT

EMPTY.

THE WIND AT ALL

THE PRINCESS,

however, loved the forest,
and spent all of her time climbing
its boughs and ruining her
skirts in its mud.



And
while the
princess
loved her
parents
and brother
very much,
she did not
care for
matters
of the
court.

The STUFFY HALLS
OF THE
KINGDOM
PALED IN COMPARISON TO
THE GREAT EXPANSE OF THE FOREST

MANY, MANY YEARS AGO,
THERE EXISTED A SMALL VILLAGE
AT THE FOOT OF A MOUNTAIN.

IN THE VILLAGE LIVED AN OLD
WOODCUTTER AND HIS APPRENTICE,
AND EVERY DAY THEY CLIMBED THE
MOUNTAIN TO GATHER WOOD FROM
THE FOREST.



WE SHOULD TURN
BACK SOON.

WHAT FOR?

THERE'S LIGHT YET
IN THE DAY, AND I CAN
CARRY MORE THAN THIS.



LOOK TO THE
SKIES, MINOKICHI.

THERE'S FOUL
WEATHER ON THE WAY.



OLD MOSAKU'S WORDS
PROVED TRUE, AND SOON
THE TWO WERE ENGULFED
IN A BLIZZARD SO THICK,
THEY COULD HARDLY TELL
THE GROUND FROM THE SKY.



THEY STUMBLED
BLINDLY, UNTIL THROUGH
THE HAZE MINOKICHI'S
YOUNG EYES SPIED:

A SHELTER!



NOT MUCH OF
ONE, THOUGH. THE WIND
POURS THROUGH AS IF
THROUGH A SIEVE.



IT'S NOT MEANT
FOR WINTER, I SUSPECT,
BUT IT MAY SEE US
THROUGH THE NIGHT.



YOU LOOK LIKE
A SNOW DEMON,
OLD MAN!



WATCH YOUR TONGUE,
BOY. THE DEMONS OF
THIS MOUNTAIN ARE NO
LAUGHING MATTER.



HAVE YOU NOT HEARD
THE VILLAGERS TELL OF
THE SNOW WITCH?

...THE SNOW WITCH?

AYE, LAD.

A CRUEL CREATURE,
AS TERRIBLE AS SHE IS
BEAUTIFUL - AND CAPABLE
OF NEITHER KINDNESS
NOR MERCY.




THEY SAY THOSE
WHO SURVIVE A MEETING
WITH THE SNOW WITCH
ENCOUNTER ONLY
HARDSHIP EVER AFTER...



"...BUT FEW SURVIVE."

A top-down view of two characters in a dark, rocky cave. They are positioned on either side of a large, round hay bale. The character on the left is lying down, while the one on the right is sitting up, looking towards the left. The cave walls are dark and textured with vertical lines.

AND WITH THOSE WORDS
HANGING IN THE CHILL AIR
BETWEEN THEM, THE TWO
FELL ASLEEP.



UNTIL, DEEP
IN THE NIGHT...

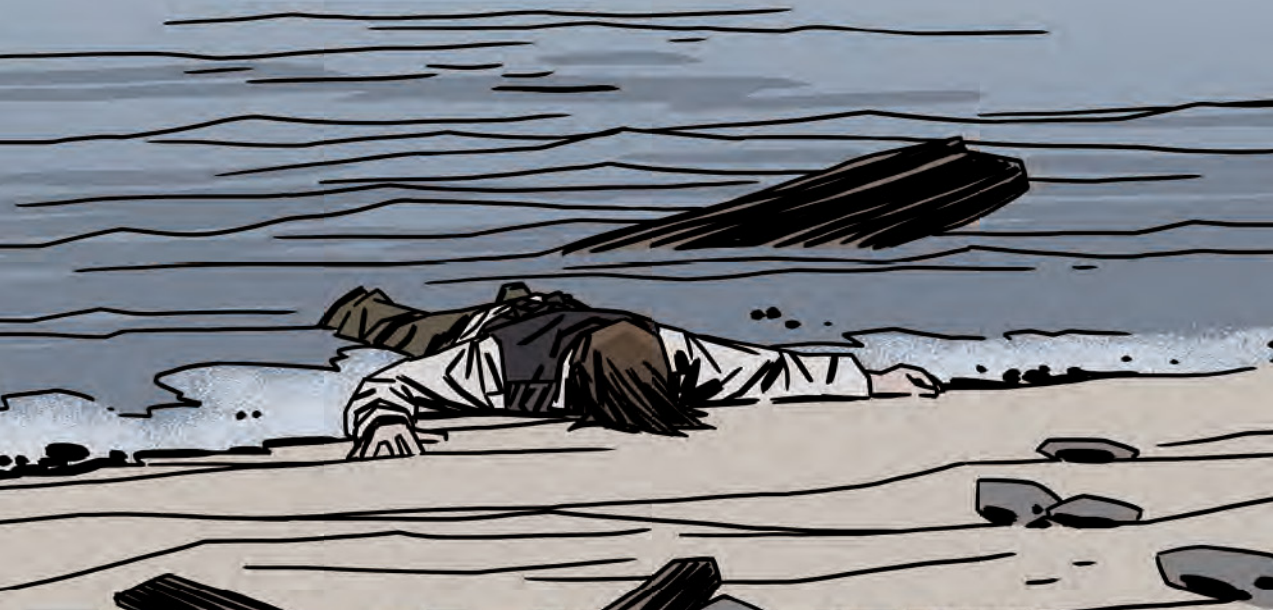
A close-up of a character with dark hair lying on their side, partially covered by a large hay bale. Their eyes are closed, and they appear to be asleep. The background is dark and textured.



WHEN HE HIT THE ICY WATERS, OUR YOUNG FRIEND THOUGHT HIS STORY WAS OVER, BUT THAT'S NOT HOW THE TALE WAS MEANT TO END.

INSTEAD OF WAKING UP AT THE PEARLY GATES, HE FOUND HIMSELF ON A BEACH, WASHED UP LIKE SO MUCH DRIFTWOOD.

A BEACH ON AN ISLAND WHERE NO ISLAND SHOULD BE.



IT WAS A MYSTERY, BUT BETTER THAT THAN TO FACE SAINT PETER.

HEAVEN TAKES A DIM VIEW OF STRETCHING THE TRUTH.



AND THE GREAT STORYTELLERS HAVE ONLY A PASSING RELATIONSHIP WITH HONESTY.

EVERYONE KNOWS THAT A WELL-PLACED EXAGGERATION CAN ADD SEASONING TO THE DULLEST OF EVENTS...



AND A TRUE STORYTELLER KNOWS THAT *EVERY* TALE BENEFITS FROM A TOUCH OF SPICE.

ESPECIALLY THE TRUE ONES.



NO MATTER HOW EXTRA-ORDINARY THE TRUTH MIGHT BE.

AND SO IT IS A GREAT IRONY THAT
SUCH A FINE STORYTELLER...


WITH HIS GLICKNESS TO
EXAGGERATE AND EMBELLISH...

SHOULD FIND HIMSELF IN THE
ONE PLACE ON ALL THE EARTH
THAT TRULY NEEDED NEITHER
TO DESCRIBE IT.


WHAT
IS THIS
PLACE
?

THE
ISLAND HAS
BEEN KNOWN
BY MANY NAMES
OVER MANY
YEARS...






Once upon a time, long winters ago, at the very edge of the world, was a village which God had forgotten.

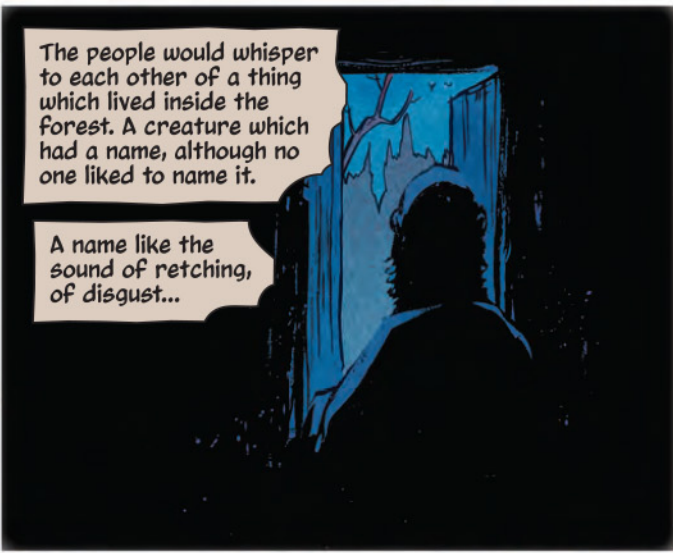


A few lonely houses stood there, fenced by a forest so deep and so dark that the sky stopped above it for fear of getting lost.

Oh, from time to time fools wandered in, trailing string behind them...



But they never came back.



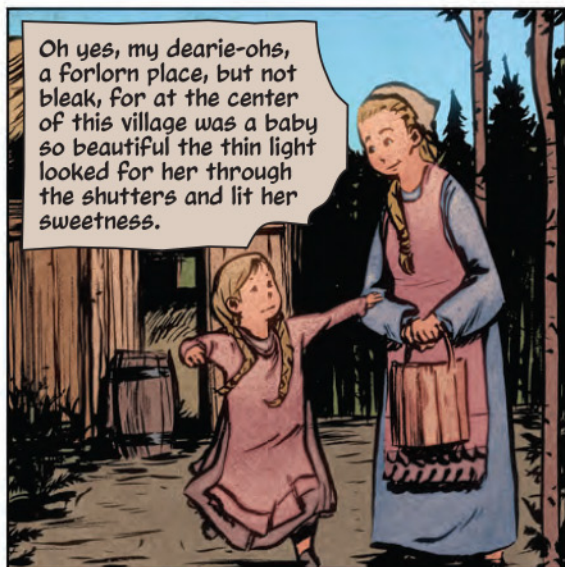
The people would whisper to each other of a thing which lived inside the forest. A creature which had a name, although no one liked to name it.

A name like the sound of retching, of disgust...



Baba.

Yaga.





AND SO IT
GOES, THIS HARVEST
CHILD BLOSSOMING,
HAIR THE COLOR OF
THE CORN. A CHILD WHO
SINGS, UNTROUBLED,
SPILLING OVER
WITH JOY.

OH, YES.
MARVELOUS.



UNTIL ONE
DAY INSIDE
OF THIS WARM
HOME...



...SICKNESS
COMES AND LAYS
ITS COLD HAND ON
THE MOTHER'S
FOREHEAD.



The father and child
sorrow through the
nights-long vigil.

For this is a place
God has forgotten
and nothing good
may flourish long.