

Bite History

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The woman said, does the dog have a bite history. Josh looked over his shoulder at Furman, who was curled up on the mat in the middle of the room. It was the kind of mat you step on when you get out of the shower. It was a very dirty pink. I could tell Josh was thinking hard about the question. He turned back to the window and bent his neck a little so the woman could hear him through the hole in the glass. I don't know, he hasn't told us, Josh said. The woman's eyebrows dropped over the lids of her eyes. Her lips snapped up to touch her nostrils. I'd never seen a face fold up like that. It made me think of the tent we'd assembled and disassembled the night before, just to make sure we were ready. The woman said, do you want us to take the dog or don't you. You look like you have plans. I shifted in my heavy boots. My socks slipped a little on the fleece lining. Josh said, okay, no. The woman said, no what? Josh said, no he does not have a bite history. Fine, said the woman, and pressed a buzzer on her desk. A door the size of the bath mat slid open under the glass window. Furman rose, shook himself, and walked right through. Josh had told me this was a top-rate place, the perfect chance for us to get away. We need some time to forget, he'd said. The woman stood and smoothed her skirt as Furman trotted out from under her desk. She picked up a little circle of glass, stuck it inside the hole in the big glass, and jiggled it until we couldn't see where the hole had been. She turned off the light. Then we heard her heels and Furman's toenails click down a hallway we couldn't see. I felt a bead of sweat drip down from where it had built up under my backcountry bra. It reminded me of something, but now it was too dark to think. Josh turned his flashlight on and aimed it at the bath mat. Under the beam, it looked addled and gray. Okay, Josh said. Let's get that tent up.