

His! Crunch, Crunch! Rrrr! The sounds of the forest woke me with a start. I looked around, but my companions were still asleep.

I had been hunting and camping with two of my cousins, Tanner and AJ, and my Uncle Dave. We had been planning this trip for weeks. My two cousins, my uncle, and I were going into the forest for two and a half days to camp and hunt with bows and spears. We had started the first day finding a good camping spot. Finally we came to a clearing that had seemed deserted. There was no water or mud to indicate nearby water, not much edible plant life - to humans or animals - and absolutely no food, so we decided it was a good spot to camp because of the lack of animal life and resources. We set up camp, then Uncle Dave had taken AJ to get some hunting done.

They came back empty handed, but we had still packed plenty of food just in case this happened. After dinner, we went right to sleep, so we would have lots of energy the morning.

Rrrr! I heard the sound again. I quickly roused my sleepy cousins, but Uncle Dave was already wide awake. He, too, had been woken by the sound. He said it sounded like a bear.

We quickly packed up camp and, strangely, headed toward the sound. "Why aren't we going away from it?" AJ whispered to his father.

"It sounds far off and distant. If it was a bear, then we'll still notice it from a far distance away. If that is not the case, then the bear retreated, but it will still come back later, now that it knows there is a food source there. Yet, the sound could have just been the breeze. You know how the wind often fools people."

We nodded in agreement, and kept moving in the direction of the peculiar noise. "Stop!" Uncle Dave said suddenly. There was a note of alarm clearly audible in his voice. "Did you see that?" We all shook our heads in unison. "There was a sudden flash of brown fur," he paused and thought for a moment. "Stay here; I am going to check it out."

He silently moved forward, keeping his eyes ahead, not daring to look back for even a second. Then we saw it, too: just the hint of brown fur and a stubby, brown tail. Now we knew for sure that what we heard had been a bear.

The bear was very far ahead of us. It would not be able to hear us from the great distance away we were. Uncle Dave came back to us and pulled me to one side. He told me to give him some of the nuts and reds that I had collected on our way to find a camping spot the day before. I obediently opened my bag and took out a handful of the stuff. As soon as I handed them to him, he took a few steps forward, toward the bear. With all his strength, he threw two of the nuts into a bush next to the bear. I was suddenly aware that he was taking steps to distract the beast while we retreated.

As soon as the nuts hit the bush, the bear turned toward it. When it turned, we finally saw the whole thing. All I can say is we would never even think about messing with that bear, or any other, in that case.

We retreated deeper into the forest, past our old camping site and finally stopping after about a half an hour or so. I noticed that we had stopped near mud, which meant we were near water. Animals would be here any minute.

Almost immediately, I saw a raccoon. I silently stood up, and loaded my bow with an arrow. I let the arrow fly and caught the animal right on its chest. Tanner then stood up and finished it off with his knife.

"Nice shot," said Uncle Dave. I grinned delightedly. I almost never get the first shot. That hunting trip turned out to be one of the best ever!

Exceeds
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