

It was an early Friday morning that we decided to have the campout. We were going to have tents, food, lights, everything. We had it all planned out.

"Witch hunting!" Damien said on our way to school. Apparently he was really excited about it. "Think we'll find anything?"

"We have to," I said "or else all that money spent on the tent and everything was a waste,"

I honestly didn't like thinking about how working a whole summer for the money would be a waste.

"I don't like the idea of it, Ethan," Jax said to me. "I mean, what if we get lost?"

"We won't get lost," I assured.

"What if we find something? What if they try to eat us? Then what?"

Damien smiled. "Like anyone or anything would want to eat a skinny kid like you."

"Hey!" Jax said, "I'm *not* skinny."

Damien and James laughed and fist bumped.

School that day took forever to end. And the worst part? They gave us *a lot* of homework. After the dreadful 7 hours that felt like years ended, we immediately got all our books, got on our bikes, and rushed to Damien's house.

When we got there we parked our bikes in his backyard and went through the back door.

First thing Damien did was yell, "I call getting the food!" and he ran to the kitchen.

"I'll get the tent and sleeping bags!" James said.

"I'll get the lights!" Jax said.

What I really didn't like is that they had left me to do the boring part... nothing. So I sat down and dribbled one of Damien's basketballs between my legs. Afterwards, I helped them load the stuff into three big Jansport bags that James had for some reason.

"I like bags," he said. We thought that it was weird to have an obsession for backpacks.

Finally we called our parents to tell them that we we're going to go camping, but even though they already knew every detail of what we were going to be doing (except for the witch hunting part because we knew that if they knew that that was what we were going to be doing they would flip and tell us we couldn't go) they insisted on having us call them when we were ready to leave. Then after 3 or 4 goodbyes Jax hung up the phone.

"Sorry," he said, "my mom hates it when me or my dad leaves."

"It's fine," I said, "Lets just get out of here already."

It took us about 45 minutes to get there. We set up camp in a pretty cool spot because it had 4 trees surrounding the area almost perfectly. It was great because James had read online that rice keeps out evil things, including witches. So after we were done setting camp up I decided it was time to surround camp with the rice Damien had gotten from the kitchen.

"I'll do it," I said. I grabbed the bag of rice and slowly started pouring the rice onto the moist ground.

We got a campfire going with some wood, dead leaves, and some rocks to surround it. After finally finishing the tents we settled down around the fire and discussed what we were going to do tomorrow.

"I think first thing we should do in the morning," James started "is get more fire wood."

"That can wait for tomorrow night," I said.

"Hmm," Damien said, "Maybe we should—

Snap!

In perfect unison James and I stood up and looked to where the noise had come from. After a few moments of staring in to the darkness we heard:

Snap! Snap! Thud!

"Hello?" I said.

No response.

"Its probably an animal," Jax said uncertainly.

James sat down, and after a few more moments of looking for what was out there, so did I.

"I think we should get some rest," Damien said.

I think the last thing we wanted to do was go to sleep. But we did anyways. We each had our own tents. I didn't go to sleep for almost an hour after that.

I woke up in the middle of the night to Jax screaming. "AAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!!!"

I jerked awake and was so surprised that I didn't even rush out. Instead, I pinched myself to see if I was dreaming. And it was in fact not a dream. I quickly hurried out of my tent into the bitter cold. I turned to Jax's tent and was horrified by what I was seeing.

Jax's tent was being ripped apart by something invisible right before my eyes.

"What the-- HELP!!" I don't know what I was thinking but I ran towards his tent yelling, "STOP!!"

I shut my eyes and swung my arms all over the place, trying to get whatever was there to go away. Then, the ripping just stopped. But as I opened my eyes and looked in the tent, I saw Jax ripped and bloody.

"GUYS!!" I yelled.

James finally came out and said "what's wr—," he turned green "Oh my-- *gag*," he ran to the bushes.

Then Damien came out and was useful. He saved the questions for later and helped me get Jax out of the tent. We laid him on a towel that James, who had stopped vomiting, had gotten and put on the floor.

"What happened?" Damien asked.

"I don't know. I just heard him screaming and when I got out I just saw the tent being ripped, except no one was ripping it. Now quick, get me the first aid."

He brought me the first aid kit but I had no idea what to do so I read the little manual. It said that for open wounds should first be treated with alcohol to clean it.

"Hold him down," I ordered. "Sorry buddy," I whispered as I began to pour a little on his chest.

His chest, left arm, and upper left back was what looked bad. After putting some on his chest, I moved on to his left arm, and from his left arm, his back.

"What happened to him?" James asked. I told him what I had told Damien.

"But--that doesn't make any sense," he said.

"Whether it does or not," I said "we gotta get him to a hospital."

We got some long, thick boards of wood and duck taped them together. We went through about four and a half rolls when we finished making the cheap stretcher.

"Help me get him on," I commanded. We laid the somewhat stretcher on his right as to not touch his gashes. We loaded him on, left everything, and left.

On our way back to society something clicked in my head.

"James," I asked, "was it rice or *salt* that kept spirits and stuff away?"

"No, it was—," he stopped. "Oh."

"James," I asked again, "was it rice, or salt?"

"I..." he sighed, "Salt," he said quietly.

"Come on, man," Damien said to him.

"It's fine," I said. "Lets just keep moving."

We got to the hospital an hour later. Jax had stopped bleeding but he had still lost a lot of blood.

"Do you know what happened?" the nurse asked us.

"we looked at each other for a moment and then three responses responded.

"Kinda."

"Not really."

"No."

"Well," she said patiently, "can you at least tell me what you saw?"

They looked at me.

"It was the middle of the night and I was asleep and all of a sudden I heard Jax scream." I explained to her about the tent being ripped to shreds by something invisible and how I fought or confused whatever it was away. I don't think she believed me but she passed the story on to the doctors. I bet they didn't believe it either but non the less knew it couldn't just be from our imagination.

Unfortunately the next morning we learned that Jax had died of hypovolemic shock. Hypovolemic shock is a condition that you get when you lose 20 percent of your body's blood or fluid supply. This makes it impossible to pump blood through your heart to the rest of your body.

We went to his six days after he died. At the funeral home I saw James talking to Jax's family. He kept crying and it looked like he was saying sorry. I felt really bad for him. We should have never done that campout.

As for what had really happened that night, we never found out. They sent a scout team to go find the tents and stuff. When they finally found the spot we had camped at, instead of seeing our tents and our equipment and the rice surrounding the camp, they found all of our tents shredded. One had blood inside. The rice had been shifted.

We never went camping again after that night. I don't think any one will ever want to camp at Aradia Woods.

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