First Time

ACT 1:

Two hours had passed, as Alec sat in the corner staring at the flower arrangement. Just on the other side of the bridge outside his house nestled in amongst the vibrant green foliage laid the trailhead for the long adventure ahead.

This would be the first time in Alec’s life that he would leave his home in the forest. The journey will not be easy, but it had to be done. Alec was determined. Although he will be so far from home. Alec had no choice but to overcome his fear. As the time for departure drew near, he got even more nervous.

“What if I get lost and never get into town?” Alec thought to himself. Alec was never good with direction. Whenever he went out with his parents whether it was shopping or going out to eat Alec would often get lost. Because of this his parents were also concerned as the hour drew near.

Finally, the time came for Alec to depart. As he left his house, he glanced over at the wooden bridge.

“This is it.” Alec thought to himself. This would be the last time he would see his house for a long time. He did not know what to expect, only that he had to find the one thing he has been after his whole life.

Alec girded up and crossed the old wooden bridge. There was no turning back at this point. He paused for a moment to take in the beauty of the forest around him. “Will I ever see this again?” he thought to himself as he headed into the nearby town.

ACT 2A:

The day grew on, and the sun shined low in the sky. Alec was running out of light, and he wasn’t sure how close he was to reaching the town. In fact, it seemed like he had been traveling for much longer than he thought he’d need to. He wanted to keep pushing on, but there was no way to tell which direction he was going in the dark. He decided to drop his pack, build a fire, and camp for the night.

Alec gathered some wood during the last few minutes of daylight left. As the darkness grew, he lit a match. Just then, he heard something approaching him on the trail. It was moving straight towards him. Alec froze with the match still burning in his hand. The noise got louder and louder until suddenly, it stops. Alec remained motionless. As the match flame was just about to singe his fingers, a breath of air blew it out. Alec jumped 5 feet back.

“Ha ha ha! Didn’t mean to scare ya, fella, but I didn’t want your fingers to burn!” The mysterious man grabbed Alec’s box of matches and lit the wood Alec had gathered. As the fire illuminated the area, Alec could see the man who had frightened him. He boasted a ragged beard and was wearing about 2 of everything; shirts, pants, hats, glasses, you name it.

“Name’s Boris,” the man said. Alec remained quiet. He wasn’t sure what to think. “Where you headin’, boy?”

Alec finally spoke up. “I’m traveling into town.”

“Town?”

“Yes, sir. You know, Harmony?”

“You mean the town that’s half a day’s travel back the way you came?”

“Back the way I came?!” Alec couldn’t believe it. He had spent the bulk of the day traveling FURTHER than he had to. Alec knew he was completely lost. “Are you traveling, too?”

“This land yer in is my property, son. I live in my cabin ‘bout 50 yards from here. I saw you walkin’ in the distance and was wonderin’ who you were. Not many people travel this trail no more.”

“Sorry to bother you, sir,” Alec said, “But I need to get to town, and I don’t think I could find the way.”

“Tell you what, friend,” Boris said kindly, “I don’t see many folks around here anymore, and I could use some company. Why don’t you stay the night with me, and I’ll take you into town tomorrow?”

Alec agreed to Boris’ offer. He didn’t know if he could be trusted, but he thought of this as his best chance. Alec grabbed his pack and followed Boris into the dark woods.

ACT 2B:

The trail back to Boris’s home was overgrown and muddy. Boris pulled out his machete and chopped his way through the bush.

“Sorry about my front yard!” Boris laughed. “This time o’ year these bushes grow a foot a day! It keeps things interesting, I guess. The fur trappin’ gets slow once summer starts rolling in.”

Boris stood there for a moment looking into the distance.

“Um, Boris?”

“Whoops! Sorry, I forgot where I was for a sec,” explained Boris.

Alec was perplexed; this was indeed an extraordinary man. They continued on until the thick wood cleared up. There was a rocky path to the front porch of a small house. Chickens walked through the yard, and giant flowers towered over Alec’s head from the garden.

“It ain’t much, but it’s home,” said Boris. “Now why don’t you come in! I have some leftovers still hangin’ over the fire.”

Boris unlocked the door and stepped into the main room. It was unlike anything Boris had ever seen. Several big clocks lined the walls. There was an elaborate mural of Buddhist temple surrounded by a thick jungle. Books in several languages were stacked in five-foot towers throughout the living room. Boris dished some stew into a wooden bowl.

“Eat up, Alec, you’ll need your energy for the hike tomorrow! Also, sorry I don’t have a bed for ya, but I figure you’ll at least be more comfortable in here than in the cold. I’ll just be reading, let me know if I can do anything for ya before I hit the hay.”

Boris picked up a book, surprisingly one in English. Also surprisingly, he was holding it upside down. He didn’t seem to notice. Alec gave up on trying to understand Boris and took a bite of the stew. It tasted like vinegar and muddy potatoes.

Alec looked around again at the house, admiring the stylish decor, and wondering how in the world he came across all this stuff. Everything was so brightly colored that he almost didn’t notice the bars on the windows. The door was lined with a sheet of steel. Alec felt a shiver go down his spine.

ACT III:

Looking down at the stew again Alec winced as he took another bite. It was still awful to taste but at least it was some food. As Alec was taking his last bite he became suddenly sleepy. Dosing off he could hear footsteps coming in his direction.

Eyes crusted over Alec began to wake up slowly. At first, things were blurry but soon enough everything came into focus. Looking around he discovered that he was in a basement of some kind with a chilling atmosphere that made him buckle. He could tell it was a basement because the walls were covered with a thick mud used to insulate forest homes. He often had experience applying it to the inner walls of his own home. Standing up Alec cried out.

“Borris?! Are you there? Why am I in this basement?”

With some wandering through stacks of dusty rotted newspaper Alec was able to find a set of stairs leading up to the main floor. One by one he took careful steps as to not make too much noise. However, this was in vain as the stairs made each step he took as excruciating as the last with a louder creaking of wood. Behind the door he could hear a faint grinding sound. Quivering from the cold and scared Alec softly called out.

“B…BBBB…BBBoris?...”

After his cry, the grinding sound stopped. Loud footsteps boomed through the air getting louder with each step. Throwing open the door with a loud crash Boris could be seen with his machete silhouetted at the top of the stairs. Gripping the machete tightly he began making his way down the stairs.

“I told you Alec, not many people like to hike around these parts anymore. What I didn’t tell you is that I don’t like people hiking around these parts either.”

Backing off Alec slipped and fell down the stairs. Horrified he struggled to find his footing as Boris approached with his machete.

“I don’t take well to people coming up into my canyon to steal my game!” Shouted Boris.

“I...III’m not here to…”

Boris took a swing at Alec as he stood up tearing a hole right through his jacket. Terrified Alec had to make a decision. Does he stay and try to calm down Boris and come to an understanding or does he run into the forest that he was equally terrified of? Taking two steps back Alec grabbed whatever he could find and hurled it at Boris. THWACK!!! A filled metal food can hit Boris right between the eyes. Stammering Boris fell to the floor holding his head where the can struck.

Infuriated Boris stands up and charges at Alec. Fearing he would get hit Alec pushed a stack of newspapers over. Boris in a state of rage runs right into the stack and falls to the floor again. Finding new confidence Alec races up the stairs knowing that he could lose Boris in the woods. However, as Alec approached the front door he was starkly reminded of the bars that lined the windows and the metal plate locking the door. In a panic, Alec looked for another way out.

Thinking carefully Alec took in his surroundings and noticed that the building had a sky roof. Without thinking he climbed up the chair and the stacks of books littered on the floor and was able to reach the skylight. Banging wildly the skylight opened as hundreds of dead pine needles poured into the room.

However, as Alec was getting his last foot through the window Boris grabbed it and began to pull as hard as he could. Not to be distracted Alec loosened his shoe and made his way to freedom. Jumping off the rough Alec ran and never looked back toward the cabin. Although his adrenaline was pumping he could faintly hear screaming coming from the direction of the cabin.

Alec ran and ran through the forest as quick as he could. Although the more he ran the more he was able to take in about the woods. He noticed how the rivers and streams always pointed south, the ridges on the hills always had the same peaks, and how the wind always came from the same direction. Finally, he had done it. He was able to make his way through the woods into a big open clearing with a distinct road running through it. At last the city was in sight.