

**“Tag you’re it! Come get me!” shouted the older brother.**

**“Ahhhhh!!!!” screamed his younger brother, going after him like a raging zombie as they tunneled down into the basined redwood forest that provided them the space and comfort to go wild without being harassed by their parents.**

**Giggles and laughter dissipated in the moist yet cool air, trailing behind the boys every movement.**

**The parents yelled out some banal caution of safety typical of their nature before heaving a huge sigh of relief, slumping into their picnic chairs. It was nice to get out of the house after a long week at work and from the kids – they had an expanded playground to be in, out of the slumpy suburban neighborhood of theirs.**

**Camping in the forest provided better respite for them than anywhere else: the forest was at least 10 degrees cooler than the rest of the city – especially the inland areas – in summer, there were less crowds in the forest (people and families there were probably going for the same reasons as they do – getting away from humans) and they would be less harassed or intoxicated by the technologies that are constantly with them – no TV and no nuisance calls from work. Sure, the flies and mosquitoes (and the kids) got in the way of their serenity in summer, but with the right equipment, they settled just as comfortably in the forest as they did in their living room; with some turning of the lever and discharge from the car’s battery, the pop up camper took its form in less than 30 minutes, with an extended patio laced with mosquito nets that served as an open-air observatory keeping the family safe from the buzzing life that bloomed in the summer heat at the forest. Now all dad needed**

was a few cans of ice, cool beer while the couple stared blankly out into the woods, with the random displays of dominance and territorial disputes – mostly between birds of the same species – taking the form of entertainment in place of the drama and suspense of cable TV. Now that's months' worth of saving well spent, thought Dad, as he remained cool under the shade of his camper.

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"Woah... check this out," amused the older child at the carcass of a dead stag. The magnificent stag had his ribcage split and hollowed out as if a bomb had detonated from within.

"Sick..." the child exasperated, as he examined the corpse of the stag, circling it and nudging it with his feet.

"Something must have eaten it," revealed the younger child meekly, as he tailed his elder brother.

"Duh, it must have been a bobcat or a mountain lion... RAWR!" roared the older sibling, as he turned around abruptly, pretending to be the visceral creature that his innocuous brother imagined.

"AH!" the younger brother blurted out and jumped back, spooked by the change in amplitude of his brother's voice and the abrupt motion of his brother.

"Pussy!" jeered the eleventh-grade child. His brother, embarrassed, stood wide-eyed, still reeling from the sudden peak of exhilaration.

Looking about and around the carcass, the older child finally found what he needed.

“That would do,” said the elder child as he picked up a branch a few inches long and started to explore the insides of the carcass. The carcass had perhaps been there a few hours before, but the moist and leaves-layered forest floor had made any blood that had spilled out of the carnage imperceptible to the naked eye; not yet visibly decomposed nor stunk, a few flies buzzed around, sensing an opportunity to make a comfortable home out of their host, lay refuge and procreate within the body of the stag. The stag’s colon was still intact but its small intestines and stomach had suffered some collateral damage from the explosive act incurred by the magnificent creature.

“Someone must have had a happy meal here,” retorted the child as he tapped his way round the ribcage that had housed its heart and lungs.

“Look at this! Ugh...” said the child as he tried to lift the heavy intestines with the stick. Finding his act too laborious and mundane, he let the organs slip from the stick.

“Hee ya! Go horsey go!” exclaimed the boy, as he wacked the lifeless body on its ass.

“te the te the te the, THE THE!” sang the boy as he portrayed the galloping scene.

“Puhhhhh mmmmmm,” as the horse bristled to a halt.

“what’s that? You’re never gonna lead the rebellion with me? Why you! Take that! And that!” yelled the child as he swashbuckled the stag with its huge antler.

“you’re never gonna get the best of me!!! HEE YAAA” bellowed the child.

**“Can we go now... I’m scared... the mountain lion is somewhere... maybe it’s watching us...” whined his younger sibling.**

**“Scaredy pants! You’re so lame, it’s not like it hasn’t eaten already,” said he, viciously adding salt on his brother’s already wounded pride.**

**“But I’m scared...”**

**“Ok! Fine!”**

**“But firrr...errrr...st...!!!” said the elder brother, as he cheekily wiped the stick on the remains towards his younger brother.**

**“Ewww! I’m going to tell mommy about this!” cried the boy as he went running away without his brother’s permission.**

**“Come back you rat! You know what they do to rats in prison? Huh!” threatened the older brother.**

**“Come back!” yelled the brother as he makes his pursuit to convince his sibling otherwise, to no avail.**