



The Cabin

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I sat on the floor with my right shoulder against one wall and my back against another. I surveyed the surroundings. I was in a long one room log cabin. The cabin was lit by eerie moonlight. The window to my right and in front of me was the only window that allowed the full moon's shine to enter the room. Each wall had two windows with the exception of the wall to my right. In the place of my wall's second window was a closed wood door. A few small slits between the doors boards allowed a little more light into the cabin.

The bottom half of my window let a light breeze flow past and through sheer window dressings. The breeze carried the sent of pine and moss. The window's dressings were the only motion in the room besides my fast pulsating chest.

The cabin was furnished with rustic furniture. To my left was a couch made up of varnished logs and thick fluffy violet cushions. The couch was paired by a chair. Between the pair was a small end table comprised of logs and an old crate. On the table sat an empty kerosene lamp and a stack of misaligned hard back books.

The center half of the far end of the cabin consisted of a stone

fireplace. Red coals slowly increased and decreased in luminescence. The coals shed little light on a very old rocking chair placed before the fireplace. Over the fireplace were two five point deer antlers. I dared not get up to rekindle the fire

In the left corner of the same wall that contained the fireplace sat the silhouette of a small unused bed. The bed was made of logs and covered with an unseen quilt and a long pillow. I longed to enjoy the bed and the comfort of sleep that it used to bring. Yet, I dared not walk to it, lay in it, and fall asleep.

Although the right corner of the opposite wall was dark I knew that it possessed a tall dresser and a small desk. I wished the desk contained a radio, a phone, or some other means to call for help. The only thing it contained was blank sheets of paper. Writing a letter for help would do no good for the closest post office was so far away I knew not where it was.

The corner opposite the couch next to me contained a black iron stove, a small porcelain sink, a small wash tub, and a small wood table with two wood chairs. The silhouetted iron stove was the only item visible in that corner. It looked like a frozen soldier. "Why

couldn't he come to life and fend for me?"

The only other items in the dim room were wood shelves that lined the upper ends of all four walls. The shelves contained canned food, dishes, kerosene, rifle shells, traps, fishing gear, an ax, and other items necessary for an extended stay in the wilderness.

Fear, anxiety, and weariness caused me to stink of sweat; or was it the rank dampness in the breeze. "No, the potent smell was fear and anticipation."

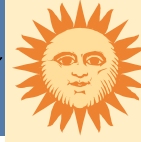
My stench was because wolves came every night. For many months they came. They were as regular as clockwork.

I purposely did not keep a clock in the cabin. The twenty four hours in the day did not mean anything to me when I first arrived. I woke up when the first sunlight and the first birds rose. I ate when I was hungry. I worked when needed. I read on a chair on the porch when I wanted to relax. I fished and hunted when I wanted meat. I worked the garden and groves so I could eat vegetables and fruit. I went to sleep when the sun set.

Time was unimportant until the wolves came. They made themselves a clock. They told



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me it was time to fear, time to fight, and time to stay awake. They disrupted my night and my day. They made havoc of my schedule. They made it unpleasant to live in the woods. They made it unpleasant to live at all.

I hate the wolves. There is nothing I could do about them. Physically they come in the silence of night just before dawn. Then, mentally they stay with me all day.

I hate the wolves. They control me. They take the pleasures of life from me. They threaten to end my life. They became my clock.

“Why don’t I leave?” you ask.

“Because I can’t. There is no way to leave; no way to escape. I do not know where to go or how to leave.”

“I tried to leave; several times. It is a long and winding trek out of the wilderness where the wolves live; many days and many nights. Eventually, each time when I tried to escape, I was reminded of the wolves and lost the way out. No matter how hard I tried, while hiking my way to freedom I would eventually think about the wolves and revisit the fear and dread that they bring. When I awoke from those awful daydreams I would discover

that I was lost. The path out of the wilderness was lost.”

“I was lucky I suppose. Each time I tried to escape only to get lost, I found my way back to the cabin. Cabin? No, not a cabin. This place that was once a haven of leisure and pleasure has become a dark dank jail. Yes, I am trapped here in this wooden jail in the middle of the wilderness; just me and the wolves.”

“There! Do you hear it? The first sound, the first hint that they are out there, the beginning.”

God I hate the wolves. Why won’t they leave me alone? Why do they come? What wrong have I done? What ill did I do to deserve the wolves?

I stood and shook my fist as I shouted, “I hate you wolves! Die be damned you! Die!”

“That was a mistake. My battle cry told them I was here and ready to fight. They love a good fight, the wolves do. I suppose, that’s why they don’t kill me. Without me they wouldn’t have anyone to fight, to harass, to maim, and to bring fear. They love the smell of fear, and I rank of it.”

Discouraged I sank and whispered, “Damn you for sweating fear.” Once again I

leaned against both walls; hiding in my dark dank corner.

“What have you done? You’ve given them a battle cry. Now they’re singing it with their hunting cry, ‘Sweating fear, sweating fear. Now he’s sweating fear. Still and rank with sweating fear.’ Damn you.”

The First was standing alone just outside the door. I could hear him breathing. He was the bravest and the strongest, which says a lot because all of them are stronger and braver than I. I could hear him breathe in the smell of my fear. The rest were running around the cabin howling, “Sweating fear, sweating fear. How he’s sweating fear. Still and rank with sweating fear.”

A thought came to me; a ray of hope; a cleverly devised plan. I crawled over to the door so only the First could hear me; just he and I would have words. I made sure to keep lower than the window. I did not want the others to see me crawling over to the First.

When I reached the door he sniffed deeply. He knew I was there. He could smell my fear and anxiety. For him it was no better place to be; an inch from me, smelling me through the thin cracks in the door.

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Softly and cockily I spoke to him, the First one, "I know something about you. You are brave and strong. You love fear and you love to bring it. If it were meat you would live forever on it. But there's something else about you I know. You are brave and strong because there are many of you. You always come in a pack you wolves do. If there was just one of you then things would be different. If it was just you and me the tables would be turned. You would not be brave. You would not be strong. You would stink of fear. You would rank of anxiety. You would be hiding in the cabin and I would be on the outside smelling you."

Suddenly, he crashed into the door with all his might. The door splintered and I slid away from the door. Then I knew I was wrong. Even if there was just one wolf and it was him, he would be on the outside and I would be sweating fear on the inside.

The First hit the door again and I curried into the same corner that I was in before. "Damn you for challenging the lead wolf. He will make game of you tonight. Perhaps you will die." Fear and anxiety poured off my brow. The wolves control me. They are my clock. I hate the wolves.

One final mighty thrust and the First came through the door. Splitters flying in the air were illuminated by the increase moonlight entering the cabin. The rush of fresh oxygen made the coals in the fire place flashed bright enough to make it hard for the First to see. He paused at the threshold to allow his eyes to focus.

The pause in the action gave me a chance to see one of the wolves that haunted me night after night and day after day like I had never seen them before. In the past I only caught glimpses of them; their teeth, their shinny fur, their muscular legs and pointy claws, their glowing eyes and their flaming nostrils, their pointy ears that crowned their triangular heads, and the stank damp breath that came from their mouths. How I hated, feared, and revered the wolves.

As I sat there cowering in my corner I marveled at something that I had never seen before. The four legs of the First were attached to a board and his body was as stiff as the board. I shouted out loud in fits of self rage and excitement, "The wolves were taxidermies and the boards that they are mounted on are held by two large hands!"

My shout caught the wolves' attentions. The First quickly

turned toward me. I panicked as I grabbed my rifle. I used this rifle every time the wolves came. It was to lamest rifle one could imagine. Its barrel was made of coiled leather and it contained no stock. If I wasn't careful the barrel would limp and fold down. The only way to make it stiff again was to snap it like a whip.

I snapped it and shouted, "Bang, bang! Crack, crack!" There was no need to load it because it fired imaginary harmless bullets. My only weapon against the wolves for all this time was a fake rifle, imaginary bullets and a loud cry, "Bang, bang! Crack, crack!"

My rifle and bullets did no harm to the wolves. It only scared them away. I knew the truth. My weapon was useless. So, the fear I had most was that one day the wolves would learn my defenselessness and kill me for the deception.

Yet, now I had just learned, the wolves had a deception of their own. They were not real. Sure, they were real in the sense that they could be sensed and feared. But they were not real wolves. Perhaps at one time they were real. But now they were dead and mounted on a piece of wood. Their only mode of transportation was someone else's hands.



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The relief I felt at the discovery was short lived. With my cry, “Bang, bang! Crack, crack!” the First learned of my location. He turned and showed his death. In new fear and anxiety I snapped my rifle and shouted, “Bang, bang! Crack, crack!” My deception worked again. The First turned and exited through the front door.

“Sun will be rising soon. Light will come and the wolves will go. I’ve lived to escape another night of fear.” Some relief came to me and some time to think.

“They are not real! They are not real! Why then be afraid?” A glimpse of confidence entered my heart. More confidence than my rifle and bullets gave me. “The wolves are not real! You are not real,” I shouted out with all my remaining strength.

Crash! Glass flew from the window before me. The wolves had broken down another barrier between me and them.

“First the door. Now the window. I’m dead for sure!” The greatest fear I had ever known since the wolves started to come entered my heart. “I’m dead for sure!”

“You rank of fear and anxiety,”

the one who crashed through the window sang.

I closed my eyes fearing the worse. Just before they shut the new morning light coming from the rising sun blinded my eyes.

Then can a pause, a silence, a stop in the action. When I opened eyes again the wolves were gone. The window I looked out of was different. Not only wasn’t it broken; it was not made of wood. It was made of plastic. The next thing I noticed was that I was not sitting in the corner. I was in my bed. I was not in the cabin’s bed. I was in my house’s bed. In fact, I had no cabin at all. I had been dreaming.

I got up to relieve myself and got a drink of water from the bathroom sink. The dream was so vivid. My fear of the stuffed wolves was so great. How could I forget a dream and feelings like that?

When I sat down the glass of water a thought was spoken into my mind. “Why do you fear and have anxiety over things that are not real? Why are you anxious when I am around? I, the Lord Jesus am your God always. You have nothing to fear, nothing to be anxious about. I am your protection. With me, the wolves are not real. Be safe.

Be still. Find pleasure and comfort in me.”

I considered those words. I thought about my fears and what made me anxious. Yes, in Jesus they are not real. Sure, they are real in the sense that they could be sensed and feared. But they are not real because in Jesus they are dead. Once they were a real threat. They could have killed me. Yet, now in Jesus they are dead objects manipulated by the Evil One’s hands and he cannot touch me. He can only wave dead objects of fear and anxiety at me. In Jesus I am safe.