

Canadian Nocturne

There it is again. The sound begins as a deep throbbing groan similar to a bullfrog echoing from a remote pond that morphs into a screech not unlike a dying child, gurgling at the end. The call, if you could label it as such, seems to start in the distance and end just outside the door...like an animal moving at light speed. Sidney has never heard anything even remotely like it. He's abused his brain with suggestions...owl, coyote, wolf, lynx, groundhog? Do groundhogs even make a noise? After hearing it for the first time last night, he even tried Googling animal sounds this morning, but remembered his cell reception was nil. Being a writer, his imagination was doing him no favors. He was beginning to regret his decision to squirrel himself away from civilization for a few weeks to finish his first novel. It seemed like a great idea at the time. His girlfriend of six months had just dropped him for a mullet-haired, Harley riding pool shark, and his best friend Ralph had offered him his dad's Caribou cabin nestled in the wilds of Manitoba at no charge. Of course he had to be flown in so it turned out to be a bargain-less deal. Lying in the semi-darkness on an Army surplus cot in the corner of the one-room cabin, Sidney was at least glad there was a solar array on the roof that powered his laptop during the day since it was now providing a feeble red LED glow that diffused the gloom. But then again, the scarlet incandescence also enabled him to discern the faint outlines of the disembodied heads of deer and elk and coyotes that lined the walls. The long dispatched menagerie all seemed to be staring at him, like that picture of George Washington on the wall of his grade school. They appeared to be blaming him for their demise and plotting an appropriate revenge.

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Not for the first time, Sidney was intimately aware that he possessed no weapon, of any kind really, unless you counted the fork and dull knife in his Boy Scout mess kit. He suddenly recalled the rallies he attended back home and the witty sign he always carried: "Protect People, Not Guns." His next thought was an epiphany of sorts...*Then how DO you protect people? Don't think my mess kit's gonna*

cut it. Of course if it was the Predator or Freddy Krueger out there an AR-15 would be as useless as an ejection seat in a helicopter. *Maybe I should cut this writing adventure short. Oh yeah, right! They're not picking me up until March 15th and I can't call anybody to get me sooner. Who came up with this crazy plan anyway? Me, damn it.*

He closed his eyes hoping to squelch any fearful thoughts, but they increased exponentially forcing his eyes back open. He recalled finding the pile of crap on his walk by the small lake yesterday. Really weird. It looked like animal scat of some sort, but it was pale blue and kind of luminous. He had knelt down to inspect it more closely and was surprised that it didn't really stink as expected, but gave off an odor like charcoal lighter fluid. There was no way he was going to touch it. He grabbed a nearby stick and poked the pile. The result proved it possessed an inner radiance and there was also brown and white animal fur mixed in the slurry. Crazy. He had blown it off as maybe campfire starter gel and cleared the incident from his busy mind...until now.

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It was hard to tell, but the sound seemed much closer this time. He couldn't look through a window to check it out because the small cabin didn't have any. Probably to keep grizzly bears from crashing through. Sidney's eyes wandered to the only door in the room. Fortunately, it was heavy duty and had a large bar that spanned and secured the door to the frame. Staring in the dark at the door he thought he heard a faint scraping sound like a tree branch brushing against wood, but there were no trees close to the cabin. He hesitantly pushed the covers aside and quietly sneaked over to the door. He put his ear against it for several moments, then sighed and headed back to the cot. Halfway there he stopped dead and turned back to look. *Was that music? Couldn't be.* He walked over and put his ear to the door again. After a few moments Sidney thought he could discern faint music, real tinny like from a cell or small speaker. Then, over the music, a squeaky female voice said, "Can I come in?" He paused for a moment to think. The voice squeaked again, "Please help me." Sidney reached over to the bar and...