

*Fredrick's lesson in human cannibalism*

11-12

Fredrick was running, not running as in a pleasure jog but running for his life. Not running as fast as he could because of a challenge but because he was being chased, truly running for his life. You are probably wondering how he got into this little situation. Lets go back and find out.

*Two days earlier:*

The coffin of Mrs. Mary Stone was lowered into the ground at the cemetery on a cold dreary day befitting of such a sad spectacle. The priest then said the prayers while the grave was filled in with the bleak mournful soil. As the crows dispersed Fredrick Stone, Mary's widower, went to speak with the father. "Thank you for doing the service father."

"It's not a problem my son, but I still don't think you should be going out into the woods on your own."

"Father it's 1827 the time of Indians in the woods is past I'll be fine! Besides I really cant stay here anymore, not without her." His voice faded into silence.

"Well be careful out there and we'll miss you, pack well if you are so insistent."

Fredrick gathered his things and headed to his now lonely home. Ever since the Yellow Fever had taken his wife he had felt nothing but desolation. He decided that he needed some time to clear his head and start again. Fredrick was going to leave the next day to venture out into the forest and start anew as a trapper and woodsman. The forest was about 30 miles away from town so he decided to get some rest for the long journey on horseback. He hoped the general store would have his entire equipment order ready to go first thing in the morning so he could get out of this place. He doused his candle and was soon embraced by the horrors of sleep.

He woke up the next morning feeling rather awful as he had nightmares about his late wife. Fredrick staggered out of bed and got dressed and ready. He sleepily put together his most important personal items. Things like a locket with a picture of Mary that he wore around his neck and his father's hunting knife that he kept on his belt. Once he had all his things gathered he left without looking back, he was glad to be leaving a place that had once held so much happiness for him but now held nothing but agony.

Fredrick arrived at the general store to find they did indeed have his things ready to go and they even had his horse saddled for him. He paid for the supplies quickly and left as fast as he could. He was finally going away from this terrible place where his wife had died and now he could start fresh doing something he loved. Fredrick arrived at the edge of the forest mid afternoon.

“Well here we go, time to go on my own” Fredrick said to nobody in particular.

He spurred his horse onto the narrow path that was hardly more than a game trail. He traveled through the woods searching for a good spot to set up his temporary camp until he could build a cabin of some sort. After searching for a few hours he finally found a decent clearing for the time being. He thought that it would have to do for the night, as it was getting dark even if there was no obvious source of water nearby. Fredrick tied the horse to a tree and rolled out his sleeping gear, ready to start working in the morning.

After sleeping restlessly for a while Fredrick thought he heard something shuffling in the bushes nearby. Since he wasn't able to sleep anyway he decided to get up and grab his rifle in case it was some animal that could be used for food. Once he had his rifle and was ready he went to investigate but could not find any sign of an animal. He looked around the whole clearing and found nothing, not even a footprint. He decided to go back to bed and try to get some more sleep.

Fredrick got up the next morning feeling rather un-refreshed and tired. He got out of bed and started a fire to cook breakfast and warm up a bit. Once he had the fire going he went to go feed his horse. The horse had been tied up on the far side of the clearing so he walked over towards where it was. “Oh dear lord!!” he exclaimed quite frightened. Where his horse had been the night before was only a large puddle of blood and the saddle. At first he assumed it was some animal that had killed his horse something like a wolf or a bear. But then he saw it, a message written on the ground in blood. The message read “too late for you”.

Fredrick ran back to his sleeping area where he had left his rifle and other supplies only to find that they were missing. Where his pile of supplies had been only moments before was a note. Written on the note in beautiful cursive were three words and only three words. They were “The hunt begins”. He set the note down on the ground still in shock, still trying to figure out what was happening. After sitting and thinking he remembered hearing rumors about this forest. He had heard a number of different versions but the thing they all had in common was that once you went in you didn't come out again.

Right then he decided, he would survive. He refused to give in to fate and die. He would escape the forest, he didn't know who or what was trying to hunt him but he would not die! He promised Mary that he would keep living and live happily in her memory. He got up off the ground and took inventory of what he still had. He still had the items that were on his person when the others were stolen. The things he still had were his canteen, his father's knife and the locket with a picture of Mary. His canteen was about half full of water, he knew his first priority was to find some water before he could escape. He used the knife to sharpen a large tree limb into a spear to protect him in case whatever visited him the night before came back.

Fredrick picked up his makeshift spear and headed out in the direction he came from. For hours he wandered around the forest completely lost. His canteen was nearly empty and he was getting thirsty, he had to find water soon. After another hour or so had passed his canteen was completely empty and he was parched. Just when he was beginning to feel hopeless he heard something. The sound of running water! He sprinted as well as he could in his dehydrated state towards the sound. As he ran he stumbled and fell, straight into a crystal clear creek. He drank deeply and sighed with contentment. Once he was decently recovered he refilled his canteen and decided to rest for just another moment before continuing.

He woke up as the sun was setting and in a daze realized he must have fallen asleep after refilling the canteen. He was still gathering his sense when he heard a voice; "you've done better than most". Fredrick jumped up and wildly looked around drawing his knife in the process.

"Who's there? Where are you?"

"My name is Samuel" as he said this he walked out in front of Fredrick.

"What do you want with me!" Fredrick yelled.

"I merely want to talk" Samuel replied "you are lucky, we do not allow many to live after we find them".

"What do you mean?" he asked edgily looking for an opening to escape.

"I and a group of like minded people live here, in this wonderful forest" Samuel stated gesturing around him "we are exiled from society because we enjoy certain tastes that others frown upon"

"I still don't understand! What do you mean certain tasters and why are you talking to me?"

"Well let me put it his way, those people that have gone missing after venturing into my forest, they were delicious!" Fredrick stared open mouthed and horrified "As to why you, you are smarter than most, you know how to survive! We could use the help of someone like you"

Fredrick with a look of pure disgust took his spear and threw it, it flew fast and true but his aim was off. With a scream Samuel sunk to the ground spear through his arm. Fredrick took one last look and ran. Fredrick was running, not running as in a pleasure jog but running for his life. Not running as fast as he could because of a challenge but because he was being chased, truly running for his life. As he had sprinted away from the stream he had seen numerous other people hiding among the trees and start after him. He ran far and he ran fast but he could not out match people who had been living in the forest for years. He tripped into a clearing and saw some of the cannibals following slowly.

As he stared in horror knowing that his death was approaching he saw another man slowly walk into the clearing clutching his arm. "I really don't appreciate that," Samuel said menacingly. Samuel slowly walked towards Fredrick lying on his back watching him approach. "I was really hoping that you would join us, but no you had to attack me instead! Now I'm going to have to kill you!" Samuel was hovering over Fredrick with a terrifying look on his face; he still had that look on his face when Fredrick stabbed upwards with his father's old hunting knife that he held concealed beneath him.

The group of cannibals stood around the clearing with shock evident on their faces. Fredrick knew that he had to do something before they could kill him. He had to do something drastic and awful but he had to survive! So before any of the other could react, Fredrick kneeled over Samuel's still warm corpse and did something that he never thought he'd do, he took a bite. Just as the angry cannibals were rushing towards him they realized what he had done, and what it meant. They all dropped their weapons and hailed him as their leader. Fredrick was still in shock not because of what he had done or because the cannibals had surrendered but he was in shock because he liked what he had done. Instead of leaving the forest like you might expect Fredrick had chosen to stay and to become the new leader of the tribe of cannibals. Even today you may hear stories of that forest and how nobody that's gone in has ever come out. There has never truly been a known reason why, but now you know the story of Fredrick and his lesson in Human cannibalism.