

## HOT / SPICY - The Wild Woods

Story telling tips: Make sure everyone is sitting in a circle so you can see everyone and make the roars loud!

Did I ever tell you about the time I went camping in the West Midlands and had a dangerous encounter with the wildlife? This was a long time ago, not long after I finished college. My dad asked all of his 4 brothers and their families to celebrate his birthday, camping and playing ball games in the forest. You know me, I love camping, and this was going to be a highlight of the summer - being with all of my family. When the day arrived, we drove 30 minutes to meet everyone at the campsite. It wasn't a campsite like we're used to; just an area set aside for people to camp in. No toilets. Nothing. We really were in the wild. [Pause to ensure silence.]

On the first night, it was starting to get dark and we were all huddled around the campfire, chatting away, when there was a loud crack and crash in the woods just behind us. It sounded like a tree had snapped and come crashing to the ground. This can happen sometimes: branches regularly fall off some types of trees, which is why you don't camp under them. But this was a pine forest where that shouldn't happen. There was no wind at the time that could have blown the tree over. Needless to say we were all spooked by the noise, but after a moment, we just shrugged it off as 'one of those things' and continued chatting.

[Make them low & throaty.] "Grrr! Grrr! Grrr!" A low throaty rumble reverberated through the trees towards us. My dad, took a quick count of the group and realised everyone was around the campfire. He stood up and shouted "Who's there? You can stop with the pranks now."

"Grrr!" Another growl made the hairs on the back of my neck stand to attention. Then, there was silence... [Pause to ensure silence.]

[Nice & loud to shock them.] ROAAARRR! It was the loudest, meanest, scariest cry I had ever heard. It somehow managed to be

high pitched and deep at the same time. You could feel it shake in your bones, just like when you stand too close to a very loud speaker.

None of us moved. [Pause.] None of us made a sound. [Pause.] "Look!" cried my oldest cousin, pointing into the dark forest. We all peered into the gloom, and after a moment, our eyes adjusted to the darkness to see two glowing amber eyes staring back at us. Then, they disappeared. Soon after, they reappeared.

Whoever, or whatever, owned those eyes was playing dare from behind a very large tree trunk. At this point, my dad started to signal with his hands for us to move back. Without taking his gaze off the glowing eyes, he stammered "OK, guys. We're going to walk very slowly back down the track. Don't worry about your things."

We all got up slowly, and started walking backwards, quietly in the direction of the track that we had walked up only a few hours before. "They've disappeared! The eyes. They've gone" We all looked at one another, not sure if it was a good thing or a bad thing.

[Nice & loud to shock them.] CREAK! CRASH! BOOM! Suddenly, we heard the crashing of breaking branches. Then thud, and another thud, quickly followed by another thud. It sounded like the earth was caving in below each furious step.

[Nice & loud to shock them.] ROOAAAARRRRRR! The roar again, and then, from out of the forest was this athletic silhouette, that looked like it was about to leap like a praying mantis. And it was very angry too. We all screamed and ran down the trail as fast as we could. When we reached our cars, we all piled in and headed back to town as fast as they would go. The dirt road that had taken 30 minutes to drive up before, only took us 5 minutes to get back to town; we were going that fast.

At breakfast, at home the next morning, the news was full of an escaped animal. "We had an encounter with a genuine tiger". The campsite wasn't so convinced. We all lost some deposit money because of that, but none of us cared. We were just glad to have got out of there alive!

## HOT/SPICY COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What was going to be the highlight of the camping trip? (1)

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2. Why wasn't it a campsite they were used to? (1)

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3. Find and copy the word that shows the campers were cold at night. (1)

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4. Sequence the following events in the order they happened in the story. Put the number in the boxes on the right. The first one has been done for you. (1)

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| Dad organised a camping trip.    |
| Everyone was spooked by a noise. |
| They lost some money.            |
| Everyone sat round the fire      |
| A silhouette appeared.           |

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5. Using paragraphs 3,4 and 5, explain how the storyteller creates a feeling that the listeners should be afraid? (3)

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6. What effect does the repetition of the phrase 'none of us' and the use of 'whoever or whatever' have on the reader? Explain your thoughts. (3)

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7. What clues does the storyteller give you that it was a tiger in the story? (3)

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8. Why are some words written in brackets? How do they help the reader?

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