

THE CAMPSITE ¹

It was time to find a place to camp for the evening. The camper's survival depended upon the selection of a good campsite. Standing on a slight knoll in the landscape, he looked up into the sky in search of a good campsite. The site needed to meet several important criteria. First, he needed a good food source nearby. Next, the campsite needed to offer him shelter. He wanted protection from the elements and he wanted protection from potential predators which might attack him.

He looked to his left and he looked to his right. He put up his antenna to sense and look for a good campsite. He even smelled the air in an effort to get a good bearing. It was getting late and he needed a place to stay for the night.

His search was answered. He saw a potential site. He began walking toward the site in what seemed more like a crawl to him than a walk. If only he could hitch a ride, he would get to his campsite more quickly.

Finally, a ride. A hiker approached. He sensed the higher level of carbon dioxide in the air left by the hiker's breath and knew that his ride was almost upon him. Quickly, he moved to position himself so that he could catch a ride on the passing hiker. There was only one chance to make the transition as the hiker walked past.

Walking at a quick pace through the high grass, the hiker moved toward his next campsite. Seizing the right opportunity the tick grasped the pant leg of the hiker as hiker's leg brushed against the blade of grass to which he clung. He hung precariously on the hiker's pant leg, fearful of being knocked off by the brush or something else that the hiker might brush against. In addition, the hiker might discover him and simply brush him off his pants. He chuckled to himself that this wasn't a bad fate either. Even worse, the hiker might kill him. He had heard about other colleagues who had met grizzly and gruesome deaths at the hands of hikers. Some were burnt at the stake of a match. Others were squeezed between two fingers until their bodies exploded. Some were simply squashed by a boot which stomped them to death. It was as if the humans were practicing genocide against his kind. He couldn't understand such cruelty since he was only doing what he was supposed to do. He had work to do and had no time to dwell further on the misfortunes of others. He knew that he had to find his campsite quickly or he might perish.

Quietly and with stealth, he moved up the inside of the hiker's pant leg. He chose the pant leg since he didn't want to give his presence away by crawling up the hiker's leg. He had learned a few things in life and he knew that this was the smart thing to do. He crawled through a small crack made by the shirt where it was tucked into the pants. He continued his trek up the back of the shirt to the lower back. His search for a campsite was about over. Quietly, he transferred himself to the back of the hiker. The campsite at last. It was a good location. The ground here was a little harder than elsewhere. Even so, it offered him several advantages. Detection here by the hiker was unlikely. In addition, he was sheltered from the wind and rain. He thought to himself that this was indeed a good campsite. He began burrowing into the warm soft flesh on

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the back of the hiker. This campsite offered him warmth and comfort. It was a good site. Now that he was finally settled into camp, it was time for dinner.