

Opening Day Excitement

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Date Posted: 5/1/2008



a warm summer evening. The swirling motion subsides as a calm falls over me and the pin settles on the target.

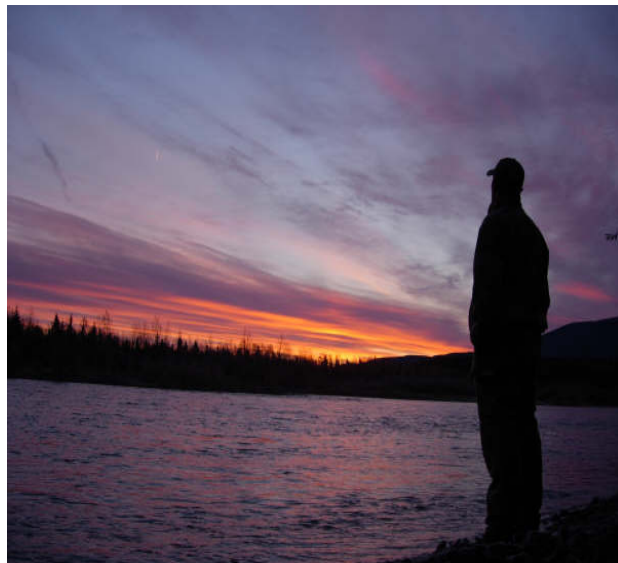
This position seems all too familiar, as though I've been in this exact location a hundred times before. Without provocation, the arrow is on its way. The projectile's tight spin seems to have been slowed as I wait impatiently for it to find its mark. The flight looks true and I watch intently as the shaft disappears below the buck's backline on its way to the chest.

The flight of an arrow has always left me in a hypnotic state. And it is right in the middle of this hypnosis that I realize I've drifted off while waiting for the sun to rise. I awake shortly before the arrow crashes home not to the sensation of finding my trophy at the end of a short blood trail but to the feeling of drool dribbling gently down my chin.

After double-checking my quiver in hopes that it was not a dream, I find myself disappointed by the thoughts of what seemed so real. The feeling lasts only a second as I remember why I am here.

I am surrounded by total silence. The cool breeze dances across my face as I peer toward the objects in front of me slowly taking shape with the coming sunlight. To

For months I've been shooting— honing my skills for this opportunity. The thousands of shots have become a blur as they have all rolled into one fluid motion, extending from the palm of my bow hand to the tip of my drawn elbow. Everything relaxes except for the constant, though unfelt, tension of my back muscles contracting. Focusing on the patch of slightly discolored hair directly behind the buck's shoulder, I watch my pin begin to hover around the spot like a mosquito on

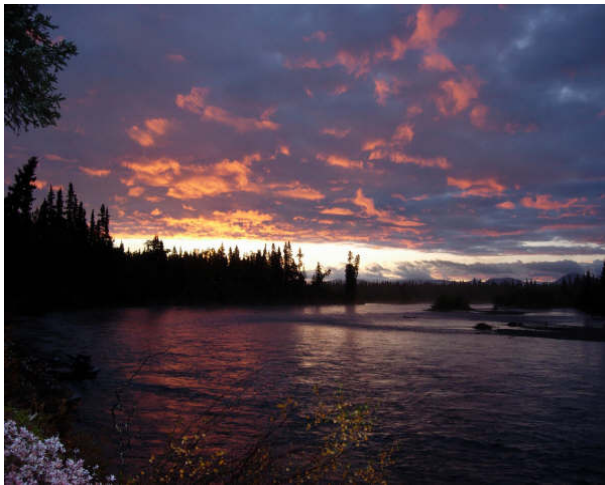


my right, a squirrel breaks the quiet as he rustles through leaves searching for breakfast. Birds began to chirp as they wake from their perches and trade shifts with an owl that lets out his last “hoot” of the night.

This is why I am here. This is why I bowhunt. The solidarity. The intimacy with nature. The sights, sounds and experiences that can only be found by those of us with the drive and desire to venture into the woods. And this is my first chance of the year. Opening Day.

Winter was too long. And too cold. Spring brought beautiful scenery and chasing turkeys made me content—for a while. The summer heat only reminded me how much I love fall. And how much I missed it. But I’ll wait no more.

I’ve been ready for this day for months. My gear is tested and works to perfection. My favorite spots are primed for action. And my wife’s ready for me to be out of the house. The only thing not ready was the calendar. Until now.



I don’t know what the outdoors will have in store for me this year. But I’ve been waiting for months and can’t wait to find out. Maybe I will draw back on that trophy buck. Or maybe I’ll just see and experience things that your average person never will. Either way, I’m overcome with anticipation as to what will be. With this thought, everything else fades away and I grab my bow and set out for another adventure in my world of bowhunting.