

For Immediate Release

### **You Know?**

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*Curated by David Berezin*

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The boy knew his father would wake him before dawn, but he had no idea it would be this early. Nevertheless, he dressed and tiredly tied his shoes; he knew he had a long walk ahead of him. His father reappeared in the doorway and spoke: “Son, let us go.”

They followed the road that bordered the property for about an hour. The sun began to peek over the tops of the trees. Even though he had done the long walk to the cabin at the end of every winter for each of his eight years, he didn't remember the air being this crisp. He cherished the annual spring-cleaning of the cabin. It was one of the few times he got to spend time with his father alone. They reached the point on the road where it crossed the path and turned onto it.

The boy knew better than to judge the hike to the cabin by the first couple miles. While the path starts out following a creek in the flat countryside, it slowly ascends into the forest hills and even has two miles of rocky mountainous terrain before it drops off at the family cabin. He and his father were mostly silent until they reached the hills, which the boy was fine with. He could hear the sounds of the flatlands turning into the sounds of the forest, the tall grasses blowing in the morning breeze, the birds singing on the top of the tallest trees. The boy's father finally broke the silence:

“You know, I used to do this walk with my father.”

“Really, Grandfather Samuel? The same path and everything?”

“Yes, son, and we always took our lunch on the same spot, which is just up around the next bend.”

The boy and his father trekked on, rounded the bend, and walked into a beautiful clearing. It was around midday and the sun was peeking over the tops of the trees into the glade. Two large rocks, which had been smoothed by time, sat surrounded by tall grass bathing in sunlight. The boy couldn't remember if he had been to this spot before, but even if he had, seeing it under this light was a whole new experience. “Looks like a perfect lunch spot,” said the boy's father. The boy agreed and jumped up on the larger of the two rocks.

The father opened his knapsack on the rock just below, reached in, pulled out two sandwiches and handed one to the boy. The boy could tell that his mother did not make these sandwiches, the fact that his father prepared them made this trip all the more special. Before the boy finished his sandwich his father was already packing up their modest lunch spread. “We should get going. We need to reach the cabin before dusk to collect firewood for tonight.”

The father stood up and looked at the sun to orient himself, found the path, and marched into the forest, with the boy in tow. Like the first leg of the trip, they rarely spoke. The sounds of the forest enveloped them. Their breathing and footsteps were nothing to what seemed like a din of birds, bugs, and blowing leaves. They started following a small stream that seemed to beam life. The boy couldn't imagine that just a few months ago this entire area was frozen over. He saw frogs playing in the tall grass and wondered where they went during the winter. Did they store food like his family? Had they just been born this spring?

The boy was deep in his thoughts when a loud “THWACK” broke the low hum of the forest. It was loud enough to make him jump; even his father turned his head abruptly. It was just to their right and slightly behind them. The boy and his father's eyes met, but before the boy could ask what the noise was, another sound pierced the warm forest air. It sounded like the yelp of an animal.

“What do you think that was?” The boy was very afraid.

“I don't know, son,” the father said. “But I reckon whatever made that noise is right over there.”

With trepidation, the two of them walked towards the commotion.

“Do you think something is hurt?”

Not three seconds after the boy's father said, "I reckon it sounds that way," they came across a sight that nearly brought the boy to tears. Before them was a fox, less than two years old, in a steel trap. The animal was writhing in pain; his right hind leg was badly mangled. As they approached the scene the fox's cries turned into a whimper and froze, making eye contact with the boy.

"What can we do, father?!"

"Poor creature..."

"How can we help him?! He needs our help!"

"The release of the trap is on the left side, right there." The boy slowly moved towards the fox, sidestepping around to the left side. The closer the boy got, the quieter the whimpers were. The forest seemed to go silent as the boy stood over the fox. He knelt down and reached for the small metal lever that was the release. In one smooth motion he hit the release, the trap sprung open, and the fox panicked, seeming to not understand what was going on. The fox looked up at the boy, then down at his hand, and bit him right in the fleshy part, where the thumb and the index finger meet. Instantly the boy shrieked with pain and the fox ran back into the forest, never to be seen again.

The boy looked down at his hand, dripping with blood. He clutched it close to his chest, gripping it tight but trying not to stain his clothes. He looked at his father as his eyes welled up with tears; the boy was riddled with confusion. The boy wanted to ask why the fox had bit him? Didn't the animal know that he was trying to set him free? Didn't the fox understand that the boy didn't set the trap, that the boy wanted to help? Surely the fox knew that the boy felt his pain, that the boy was horrified at what had happened to the fox. A million thoughts raced through his head but all he could get out was "Father... why? Didn't he know?"

The father walked up to the boy and embraced him, holding the boy's head in one of his hands while the other one patted the boy's back. After a minute the child looked up at his father, still not understanding what had happened. "Why father, why did he bite me?"

"He was scared, son."

"Didn't he know I was setting him free?"

"Oh little Abraham Lincoln, he was just scared, he didn't understand. You can't expect all God's creatures to understand your actions, all you can do is make sure you are doing the right thing in your heart. That is what matters most. Now wrap this handkerchief around your bite, we will be at the cabin soon enough."

Abraham and his father walked on, mostly in silence. And while the boy's wound hurt from time to time, he knew he had done the right thing.

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You Know? is a group show curated by David Berezin, featuring the work of Nicolas Ceccaldi, Anne Collier, Jonathan Horowitz, Paul McCarthy, Kate Owens, Kirsten Pieroth, and Eric Sidner.

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