

The Last Lap
Making Shapely Fiction – Jerome Stern
by:Jeremiah Stillings 6/22/2019

“Place the character, right in the opening lines, close to the climax of a series of event. Use juggling to show the reader how they arrived here”

1

“Lynx”

Determined, I pushed my head through the branches, breaking them as I climbed, the sun already too high to hide my efforts. Amber sap, already making my pants stickier than fly paper. The hair on my forearms already matted and covered in the trees defenses. My hands stinging as I grabbed the thicker limbs with sharp armored bark and pulled my self higher breaking the smaller branches with my body as I ascended. As the tree narrowed, I stopped to pull up my bow. The draw up rope was not on my ankle. Looking down, I realized I never secured it.

Pulling my arms and legs in I shot down through the broken limbs, and branches to find the ground only a short ten foot drop. Grabbing the draw up rope I secure it in a death knot that will never break to my right ankle.

The leaves of the trails suddenly grew loud as they were marched on, the deer were coming, and I was on the ground! Jumping up, I grabbed the nearest limb and proceeded to ascend back through the maze of sharp bark, snapped limbs, pine cones with razors at the edges, and the unfortunate branch still in the way of my determination.

As my feet found two larger limbs as a foot hold, I unsheathed the Cub Scout Pen Knife cutting a shooting path. The sun made sure I was not to be missed. The Buck knife came out and the fixed blade became a deft axe as the larger limbs were cut off like dragons heads, crashing into the lower ones.

Stopping to gauge the time, the sun was 3 full inches over the horizon, my inner self started in. “Wes is going to be so mad at me, he took off an extra day during a busy mason season to take me deer hunting in Bradford County Pennsylvania.” “Why did we arrive the day before Archery season started, well duh, Jeremy, he has to teach me how to pick a tree, set a tree stand, climb the tree with it, and most importantly how to find where your stand is in the dark” My mind was giving me the verbal chewing out that I knew was coming.

“I might as well just climb down and go back to the cabin, by now, the deer are all bedded down for the day.” My mind, continued its abuse, “Jeremy, how did you forget where your tree stand was?” “Jeremy, why in the world did you pick a pine tree to climb when the sun came up?” “Jeremy, you need to be in place ½ hour before sunrise....”

3 and ½ inches, my thoughts just cost me precious time, I immediately started to pull my draw up rope hand over hand, as I became aware I was being watched. My 4 inch razor sharp Buck knife was easily accessible, but now I had both hands on a rope. “It was watching, maybe that is all it will do,” my mind rationalized.

“Clang,” the 70 pound draw, PSE compound bow of my 14th birthday hit a limb and rang out its displeasure. The next few lines are nothing more than a fear response... I would never react this way again...

The Last Lap
Making Shapely Fiction – Jerome Stern
by:Jeremiah Stillings 6/22/2019

“Place the character, right in the opening lines, close to the climax of a series of event. Use juggling to show the reader how they arrived here”

2

The breath of two nostrils done waiting hit my neck, the hair stood erect as I did I dropping the rope holding my bow. The goosebumps formed, the gut flipped, twice, then again. Time stood still.

The beast behind me could sense my fear and let out what could be called a victory roar of it's prey's defeat. As my ears heard a LION, my turning face and eyes met the beast. It was a Pennsylvania Lynx. The tan spotted coat with winter thickness, already full, was already blood stained. The teeth looked larger then they probably were, but that second, when I jumped straight out, my mind yelled Saber Tooth Tiger, RUN!

RUN, STAY ALIVE!

As the pine branches caught my decent, the Lynx advanced and shortly I was running full speed down the muddy rock strewn mountain side; dragging my bow via the bungee cord death knotted to my right ankle. The bow caught a bad angle on a rock and jumped into the air and dived with full force like a boomerang returning right where the lynx chose to step next. He stopped faster then bow was moving easily avoiding the clumsy object. The chase was abandoned, but I did not stop, I did not dare.

I ran the two miles, in panic, to the cabin, cutting my saving grace off my ankle as I fled in terror. The bow sunk, cam first, into the muddy field that last night's rain created.

When 11 am came around, I had a cold shower and smelled of my gasoline bath before the water hit, I would have to face my uncle Wes, retrieve my bow, find my stand, and tell the story to each returning hunter for the next five years, as I was kept on as the storyteller instead of hunter.