

Axeman.

Nobody here would hear a cry for help. He was grinding an axe and waiting. In this desolate place, he felt at home. He could do his ghastly deeds without interference, except from those who would be his victims and would be expected to offer some resistance.

He smiled as he looked at the trees, heard the wind going wild and the leaves rustle. He looked at his collection of axes. All deadly in their own way. Some he could throw with precision and cleave the skull within a 30 foot range. Some would by sheer weight crush anything in their way. And his favourite axe was an instrument of mayhem, with its jagged edge meant to tear and rip into soft flesh and splinter bone. He could carry 5 of them in a harness he'd made. Spring was just arriving and then it would be summertime. They would come in droves to this place, to camp or to visit the little hut, in bad need of repairs. He could barely stand the waiting.

At this time of year there was no berries and no mushrooms. His supply of food was dwindling. Spring was here in all its green splendour. No one had come yet, but he knew how to play the waiting game. Ha, ha – in a short while those who came would have the time of their life, in a bad way. He had started to walk around on a daily trail, just to make sure he wouldn't miss anyone. But teenagers were a noisy bunch. Too noisy, they needed to be calmed down, like all the way down six feet under. When he was a teen he'd been very calm. So calm he'd passed all of his days in the educational system unnoticed. They would notice him now!

He'd thought he would find some game to supply his supplies. But all the rabbits, birds, deer and any other animal had disappeared, almost as if he had scared them away. Well, maybe he did when he walked around with his mask and harness. It was rather hot wearing all that. He was more and more frequently sitting down to wait, like a predator ready to pounce. The hours went by so quickly. He had begun to double his efforts by taking nightly walks, but after one too many accidents where he nearly had decapitated himself, he decided that daytime or at twilight would do just fine. He sat at nighttime outside his tent and looked for a glimmer of light as a sign that someone had occupied the hut or put up a tent by the lake. He was sitting in the dark to avoid attracting the mosquitoes. They managed to find him anyway.

Perhaps camping wasn't the thing right now and of course springbreakers might go where there would be a party. He was never invited to any party, but soon he would have his own special one. Summer was even hotter. He had to ration his water. The ground was muddy and tiresome to walk on, as he trampled on. He was hungry all the time now and thirsty. And thirsty for blood. Eventually they would come. Perhaps when it was hunting season and all the wild berries had become ripe. He had been very patient and he took comfort in the old saying that all good things come to those who wait. Just a little longer and then he would run amok.

The daily walks was now weekly. Summer was ending and all was quiet. He thought about going back to the city, but then assured himself that giving up now would have made all his careful preparation and all his waiting be for nothing. But all he had left was a package of crackers. And he'd stopped training because he got dizzy just doing a few push-ups.

The rain had come with a vengeance. He had plenty to drink and that was the one positive thing about that. He felt weak. If anybody was coming now, they might be even more crazy than him. And he wasn't sure he'd have the strength to overpower them. He thought he'd picked the perfect spot, not too popular, making it impossible to terrorize the campers or those off for a weekend, but a secluded place, a hidden gem, a hideout for true nature lovers or anyone wanting a peaceful place to meditate. He'd thought how he would chop up hippies, dumb teens, those self-absorbent hikers, city folks who thought they were smart and hip going “off the grid”, someone wanting to

find himself or herself only to find their untimely demise, those piss-poor nobodys that couldn't afford a decent vacation... Well, maybe not the last ones, they would get a pass.

He stumbled out of the woods finally reaching the rangers' station. He'd left his weapons behind. He was cold and exhausted. The office was closed and he couldn't muster the strength to break in. It possibly wasn't worth the effort either, why would they have anything stored there? The town was a 2 days walk from this point. And as he thought about how he should've listened to his better self earlier, the snow began to fall.

He was almost unconscious as the headlights found him. The car stopped. An old lady stepped out, slowly either because she couldn't move any faster or because she was reasonably cautious. He wasn't a threat to anyone in his present state: starved half to death, chill to the bone and with a mind that could hardly put together any comprehensible thought.

You silly thing. - she said as she was helping him up, showing a surprising amount of strength for such a tiny creature. - No one comes up to these parts anymore.

She half-carried him into the blessedly warm insides of a heated truck cabin and as she poured him hot chocolate from her thermos, from somewhere deep inside a tear found it's way out of his eye.

The end.