

Will and His Dog and the Camping Trip

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Will and His Dog and the Camping Trip

Will had wished the day away and could hardly wait for the final bell of the afternoon to ring which would signal the end of his last lesson of the day.

He ran all the way home from school and didn't even stop at his usual resting place half way up the hill which led to his house.

This particular day, the last Friday in June, was the eighth birthday of Will's best friend Charlie. His next door neighbour, Alex – which was short for Alexandra, was coming home from university and she had offered to take Will, and any friend that he chose, camping for the night with her boyfriend James.

Will had chosen to take Charlie, who lived in the house opposite his. The boys had always dreamed of going camping in a proper tent and were so very excited that they would finally be able to go on a real adventure together. Will's mum and dad were allowing him to take his dog Clive on the camping trip which made it even more exciting.

Charlie was home schooled because he suffered from panic attacks whenever he was in situations where it was loud or when there lots of people he didn't know. He was even more excited than Will who had been his best friend since he had moved to the house on the other side of the road some five years ago. Charlie really liked Alex too and always called her his 'pretend sister'.

Will and Charlie thought that Alex's boyfriend James was amazing. James was twenty years old, tall, strong and knew everything that there was to know about camping. He ran his father's farm, which was somewhere down the lanes, and he had been Alex's boyfriend for four years. Alex and James often went camping together and had all the gear that they would need. The only gear that the boys needed to bring was themselves, the clothes they would need and a mat for Clive to sleep on.

As soon as Will got home he took off his school uniform and put on a vest and some shorts. Charlie had been looking out of his window since two o'clock that afternoon waiting and watching to see when Will would return home. As soon as he saw Will running up the road, Charlie grabbed his rucksack, kissed his mum and dad goodbye and ran over to Will's house.

James and Alex arrived five minutes later in James's jeep which Will and Charlie said could drive over anything. Alex hopped out and loaded the rucksacks and a sack of potatoes that Will's mum had given her into the boot of the jeep. The boys were puzzled because they couldn't understand what use a sack of potatoes could possibly have on a camping trip. However, Will's mum always said that a potato was a lovely thing – especially when roasted in duck fat and served with gravy, broad beans and a nice piece of pork. Will thought how silly that was because they were hardly likely to have a roast dinner on a camping trip.

Will's mum was fussing about which coat he should take and she kept asking James lots of questions about the food they would eat and if his sleeping bag would be warm enough. Will's dad told her to stop worrying and said that everything would be fine. He told Will to have fun but to be careful. Clive jumped into the boot of the jeep and everyone laughed as he barked impatiently waiting to go camping.

The journey from Will's house to the place where James and Alex always went camping took only about twenty minutes to drive. The boys were so excited as they sat in the back of James's jeep that they thought they were going to burst. They finally turned off the main road and down a bumpy track into a forest which eventually led out into a clearing beside a pond.

They all helped unpack the jeep and everyone worked together to pitch the tents. James let the boys hammer the pegs into the ground with a mallet and tighten the guy ropes. The boys laid out their sleeping bags on the ground sheet and lay on them imagining what it would be

like in the middle of the night in a tent in a forest. Both boys were a little scared but they didn't want to show it to each other and certainly not to James. Will laid Clive's mat out on the ground at the bottom of his sleeping bag.

James sent the boys off to find some rocks and stones to build a fire pit with while he and Alex went off to collect twigs, sticks and bark. Clive went with Will and Charlie and ran off in front to explore.

Within half an hour, James had removed the grass from a patch of ground near to the pond and he formed a circular fire pit with the stones that the boys had collected. He placed the twigs that Alex had collected on the ground and heaped the larger branches and other pieces of tree-fall that he had picked up on the top. Within five minutes the fire was cracking away nicely.

The boys laughed at Clive as he kept jumping in and out of the pond to retrieve a stick that Alex was throwing for him. Every time Clive climbed out of the pond he shook himself dry and the water that had collected in his fur sprayed everywhere. Charlie thought that this was the funniest thing he had seen. Will was glad that his mum wasn't there because she would have been very cross at the state of Clive who was stinking and soaking wet.

James cut the sack of potatoes open with his penknife. He picked four of the smallest potatoes and asked everyone to choose one. James hollowed out each potato with his penknife and Alex stuffed bread into them one by one.

Each person floated their potato with the bread upside on the pond. The rules of the game were simple: the potato that stayed afloat the longest won. Some ducks immediately swam towards the potatoes and started pecking at the bread.

Alex's potato capsized first and disappeared beneath the surface leaving only a sodden lump of bread floating on the water. Will's potato was the next to go under and a very greedy duck pecked hungrily at the bread. Charlie's potato sunk soon after. James won the game and his potato seemed to be unsinkable. Will and Charlie knew that James would win because they supposed that he had played the game many times before.

James placed two of the larger potatoes on a log and gave the boys five stones each. He told them that if they could hit the potatoes with the stones from ten paces away then he would cook an extra sausage for each of them.

The boys stepped ten paces away from the log and threw their stones. It took Charlie four throws to hit a potato and Will sighed with relief when his final stone knocked the second potato off the log.

It suddenly seemed to everyone that they were hungry all at the same time. Alex put some sausages in a pan and started frying them over the fire. The boys said that the smell was nicer than they had ever smelled sausages at home. Clive, who had been lying beside the fire drying off from his adventures in the pond, was showing a great deal of interest in the sausages and obviously hoped that he would be given one (or more likely seven) of them.

Alex gave the boys one large potato each and showed them how to wrap it tightly in foil. The boys then placed the potatoes in the fire close to the edge of the pit where the stones were. Alex told them to go and find some long sticks to prod and turn the potatoes while they cooked.

When the sausages were cooked everyone ate their fill. Will and Charlie ate four sausages each, Alex managed three and no one could believe it when James gobbled down nine. The boys drank lemonade from bottles and James and Alex drank beer from cans.

Poor Clive looked very sorry for himself because nobody had given him a sausage – even though he had been sitting very close to everyone and staring at them. His tail started to wag and he got very excited when James threw him three sausages. They laughed at Clive eating the sausages because he snaffled them down even faster than James had eaten his.

The boys prodded and turned the potatoes and, after about forty minutes, Alex said that they were done because she could squeeze them slightly with her fingers. The boys removed the potatoes from the fire and the foil and ate the freshly cooked potatoes as if they were food prepared for a king.

Will and Charlie grinned widely as they smeared butter onto their potato and ate it like an apple with no knife or fork right there in the middle of the forest. This was the best birthday ever for Charlie and he was so happy that he had been invited. Will thought that this was the best thing he had ever done and decided that he would try and persuade his mum and dad to take him camping.

The boys climbed into their sleeping bags, zipped up their tent and told each other scary stories until they both fell asleep in the early hours of the morning. Neither boy had ever slept more soundly than in that tent or ever as happily.

In the morning Will woke up early because Clive was licking his face. Will unzipped the tent and let Clive out for a run around.

James was already up and was cutting a loaf of bread into slices with a large camping knife. He broke some eggs into a flask and lit a small camping stove. James put some butter into a frying pan and placed it on the stove. He put one slice of bread at a time into the pan and then poured eggs over the top. James told the boys that the food that he had prepared was called egg-bread. Will and Charlie each ate three slices of the egg-bread and drank some orange juice that Alex poured into plastic tumblers from a carton.

After breakfast Will and Charlie walked around the pond with Clive. When they returned James and Alex had taken down the tents and had loaded all of their gear into the jeep. They all got into the jeep and, as they left the clearing to return home, Will decided that one day he would return for another camping adventure.

When they arrived at Will's house, his mum made everyone a cup of tea. Will told his parents about everything that they had done. When they had finished their cups of tea, Will thanked James and Alex and Charlie went back to his house to see his mum and dad.

Clive was taken outside and scrubbed with warm soapy water and Will had a long, hot bath.

Later, Will's mum asked him what he thought had been his favourite part of the camping trip. Will thought about it and chuckled to himself when he realised that all of his favourite memories of the trip had involved potatoes.

The end.

Dear reader, I hope you enjoyed my story. I wrote this story for my eight year old son to read during the COVID-19 lockdown. He enjoyed reading the story and so I thought I would share it on the internet. This is not Will and Clive's only adventure and so, if you enjoyed this story, why not read about the other books?