

Taken by the Tide

By: Audrey Tromp

I loved the cold. The breeze hit my face like a slap as I walked out the creaky rusty metal door with a torn screen. I live with my great uncle. He is a big person in my life, and I love him for that. My parents are divorced, they fell out of love. I'm glad I didn't have to deal with any fighting between them. My great uncle gained custody over me at age 7. I am 12 now, and I wonder what it would be like if I lived with my parents. My uncle's house is on a hill, near a forest, and it wasn't greatly furnished. I get my camouflage bibs over my pants, and I bunch them into my boots. I put on a thin sweater over my shirt. I smelled the musty air, it smelled old and chalky, yet having been in the house so long it no longer bothered me. My great uncle wobbles down the stairs in his hunting gear. I heard the microwave beep loudly. I take the lasagna out of the microwave and open the lid of the tupperware gently. It turned out it wasn't lasagna, but I still enjoyed it anyway. There was the buzzing of ladybugs in every room, with the wallpaper peeling off of the cracked walls. I walked outside into the chilly air, and put on my jacket. I waited for my uncle outside. It was cold and breezy outside, the wind rustling and howling against the trees. I could gaze up and see Orion above me. We walked a long way to the corn field, where we walked into a field where the tall, brown grass lay mostly flat. Uncle Logan told me the first time we went out here that we came to this field. I have to pick up my feet when walking through the wet gushy puddles on the path, or I'll sink or trip on a twig. I tighten the strap on my crossbow on my back. I clutch my bag. I remember to stay close behind Uncle Logan, because at three in the morning, dark, and it's scary, so I brighten my headlamp and keep an eye on my uncle. I hear our muddy boots gushing in mud and stomping down twigs. We try to walk as quietly as possible, but it's hard when there are leaves on the ground from autumn. We tried to imitate the footsteps of a deer, picking our feet up high and putting them down slowly. We eventually arrived at the ground blind in the forest. It was camouflaged, as if it would make a difference if it were bright orange. Deer can still see, even though they may be colorblind. We sat in the blind, and put out bags down. I handed the crossbow to my uncle and he loaded it. Pulling the string back with all his might, and handing it to me again. I placed the bow

onto the crossbow stand we had brought, and placed an arrow in it. Now came the boring part, waiting. We waited for about an hour, hearing distant sounds, even though they were too distant to tell if it were a mouse or a deer. We heard coyotes still howling in the distance. My uncle told me not to be scared because coyotes are scared of humans. At this time, it was still too dark to shoot anything, we'd still have to wait a few hours. Even with the wind being blocked by the blind, I was still a bit chilly. I put on a warmer jacket, and as much as I wanted to, I figured complaining was gonna scare deer away. We opened the windows of the blind, removing the camo cloth to see the outside. It still was lacedark, but there were still noises, faintly. They were closer this time. They got louder until I was certain they were out in front of the blind. I still couldn't see anything through the scope of my crossbow. But i could tell there was a deer somewhere close, yet it wasn't legal to shoot it now, it was still dark. It could be a coyote, even though it was unlikely, it was possible. We wait in the blind until the sun rises, and it is finally legal time. We see nothing, hear nothing. My uncle told me that deer are usually active at night. It had felt like hours. I needed a drink. I was hungry. I was bored. Waiting felt like forever. Whenever I thought I heard something, my Uncle would shake his head. It wasn't always a deer. But then I heard a strange noise. It wasn't a crack, or a snap, or even close to the leaf crunching noises. It was distant, and it was faint. But it was a sign there was activity out in this area. It happened to be a buck grunting. It was a boring wait the rest of the day. More than 10 hours in a blind, one bathroom break. Some day I wish I could be in a treestand, like my uncle Logan, or my Father.

But they hunt in different areas. I feel like I'm mature enough to hunt myself. Unfortunately, it isn't the mental age that decides that. "Shh, I hear deer." Uncle Logan whispers. I nod. I shuffle in my chair, it makes more noise than I had imagined. *Thump! Crunch! Slide! Boom boom boom boom boom....* My Uncle tries to hold in a giggle. "Guess we may not be able to shoot that deer, but we know they're over here." He whispers. He pats my shoulder and I smile. Failure is something you get used to in the hunting community. There are times where you get nothing, maybe even no

activity at all, but it is something you have to deal with. It isn't the end of the world, though it feels disappointing when you lose a deer, or even not get a deer at all. Before I knew it, a few hours had passed quickly that day. We only heard a few noises, nothing too special. It grew darker as time flew past. I was tired and hungry, but eating or sleeping would make too much noise. Because I snore. I glance at my uncle who looks through the blind's small windows. He signals to me that he doesn't hear anything. He then whispers, "Do you want to go?" And I nod. It's been a long day. We head back to the trailer, and I hear coyotes howling behind us with their eerie cackles. My uncle reminded me the first time we came out here that coyotes are afraid of humans. We got to the house and everything was normal. We had our dinner. We went to bed. I almost wish that we'd never leave the house and stay there forever, as long as I'd live. Not a care in the world....except school. School was the only thing that caused any sort of stress in my lifetime.. Tons of homework, and terrible peers. None of the adults believe me when I say my teacher is strict, and it is very irritating. That's the only thing that I am not fond of when it comes to life. Other than that, my life is perfect. I would love to be able to live anywhere, but I am only happy here with my Uncle. But nothing lasts forever. My uncle announced that we'd be moving. He said, "I bought a property out in Virginia around where the rest of the family is. We can get outta this old crusty house and maybe we could start a new life in Virginia!" I couldn't believe it. I was so unhappy, and I really did not want to move. I was never close with the rest of the family anyway, but I had to deal with it if it was making Uncle happy. I was livid, but I tried not to sound like I was angry when I spoke. "I don't want to,.. I love it here. I would never wanna change anything." He gave me a look. I instantly regretted what I said and made sure to never bring it up again after that, but I always thought about it. We spent the rest of the deer season hunting and trying. I think my uncle was surprised that I was so attentive the last season I had out at our house. I waited until the day where I wouldn't have to hunt anymore, wishing it would cancel itself out. Before I knew it, It came. The drive there was nice, the scenery was phenomenal, but I was homesick, from the point I stepped foot off of our property. The drive

was bumpy and most of it was not very smooth. I watched as we passed everything. Eventually, I got bored and played on my phone until we arrived. The house was massive, newly refurbished and it smelled like roses. I thought that houses of this quality were extremely expensive and were only bought by rich people. We never cared about money and we were happy in our humble little home. We always had what we wanted and now it's gone. For me. My uncle has what he wants now, and I guess I could at least pretend to be happy, if it makes him happy. I ended up liking the new home, it wasn't as bad as I expected. I don't know if it had been better than the old house. I missed the musty, chalky smell of our old home. I looked outside. It was higher off the ground than I had expected. The view was amazing. I saw everything clearly, it was nice. I eventually stopped dozing off, and decided to explore the rest of the house. It was a rather large house, very spacey. It had bright radiant walls that beamed in my eyes every time I left my bedroom. I glanced out the window every day, It wasn't anything I had ever seen before. It was busy, loads of people were strolling around in fancy clothes, or in expensive cars, and they all looked either in a big hurry, or they looked happy. There was construction outside in the distance, the sirens from the machines blared. I watched the crane move and pick things up. They knocked down a building that had been there a month ago, when we moved in. It was warmer in the city. The buildings blocked the wind. As the crane moved away, I saw some golden sand, and I could just feel the warmth from a mile away, even through the foggy window. It was nice. Behind it was a nice bright blue body of water, the white air bubbles fizzed on the untouched sand. Nobody was there, and I decided that I'd leave the house myself. My uncle was happily cooking in the kitchen. I ran to the beach, and I looked at the glittering sand. I looked around. I decided that staying in my new home wasn't so bad, and I could live with it, only if I could stay here. I Let my toes go into mushy wet sand on the shore and stepped into the water. It was like no other hunting experience. rather than Roselle Ashford the meat eater, maybe Roselle the swimmer would be even better.