

Full Moon Over Juneau

J. Kevin Burchfield

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Cindy, Whiskey, Moose,
Remington, Barley, and Monopoly Burchfield.

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1 An evening at the glacier...

It was a beautiful bluebird day in Juneau, Alaska. One of the rare ones indeed! The sun was high in the sky and the air was crisp. The smell and feel of spring was uplifting my soul like the thermals the bald eagles like to ride this time of year.

Cindy, my wife, was out of town so I was cruising the proverbial Juneau Trinity of Wal-Mart, Fred Meyers and Costco looking for bargains and wasting time. I was laughing at people, only on the inside of course, and wondering what I should do with the rest of my day when I got a text

from a good friend with a splendid invitation.

Yes, our own resident Sweeney Todd aka Jasmine the demon barber, said she and a bunch of her friends were going out to Skaters Cabin for a bonfire and cookout that evening and I should come along. She promised the most wild and pagan of celebrations so how could I resist? Besides how often does an old dude like me get invited to hang out with a bunch of 20 something hotties!

“Ah...nice of the young wild ones to think of me,” I thought.

With my evening plans laid to rest I could now focus on some serious relaxation and the search for the perfect beer for the evening!

First a good long nap in the sun. I drove to the pull out on Egan Drive between the Sunny Point exit and Vanderbilt Hill Road and positioned my truck so the sun fell right across my face with my head resting against the driver side window. I was out like a light soaking up that glorious warmth. Winter had been long, dark and

yucky here in Juneau and spring was certainly welcomed by all!

I slept about an hour soaking up those rays until I was awakened by a crazed woman shrieking outside my window and pointing towards what she perceived to be a wolf in the wetlands.

“There it is! There it is,” she proclaimed!
“There’s a wolf in the field!”

I jumped out of my truck, still dazed from my lovely slumbers, to see what the hell she was screaming about!

“There it is! Do you see it? It’s right over there,” she continued pointing and screeching!

“That...” I said pointing at the beast she was carrying on about, “Is not a wolf...it’s a lab!”
And sure enough the only canine in the entire wetlands that day was a chocolate lab.

“No, no, no! It’s a wolf! It’s a wolf,” she insisted!

“Are you mad? Are you insane? You have disturbed my sleep for a stupid chocolate

lab! Where the hell are you from? I'm sure it is not here," I asked.

"It IS a wolf I tell you! And I'm from Texas, the biggest state in the union I might add," she proudly announced!

"Well, Honey" I replied "First off...if you cut Alaska in half Texas would be the third largest state and secondly THAT is most certainly not a wolf because wolves don't chase frisbees and that critter is now chasing a red frisbee!"

She became quite flustered and said, "Maybe it's a trained pet wolf?"

"No madam it is not a trained pet wolf!" I said with just a hint of exasperation. "But you should keep your eyes open and maybe just maybe you will see some of our other fabled wildlife. And for the love of all that is sacred when and if you do don't scream about it! Just enjoy the view...quietly. If you scream your freakin' head off every time you see a wild animal, one of two things will happen...the critter will be spooked and run away or the critter will feel threatened and attack you! So chill the hell out!" I am ashamed to admit that privately I was

hoping the latter would occur. I know I'm a bad man as Lou Costello used to say!

With that lovely spot of nonsense complete I climbed back into my truck, turned up the AC/DC and pulled back onto Egan Drive. Time to find the perfect beer.

I drove over to the Alaskan Brewing Company and slid my overfed American ass inside and bellied up to the bar for a fresh sample. Free samples at the brewery are a staple of life in Juneau and highly recommended!

Kevin...what a fine moniker he has...was eagerly waiting to pour me a perfect sample of Alaskan Summer Ale. Always go for the lightest brew first when sampling I say. While I enjoyed my lovely drink he yammered on about some marathon he was planning to run. I did all of the obligatory nods and "hmmm's" required to feign just enough interest to satisfy him and thus keep my samples flowing!

This lovely little dance continued for about thirty more minutes until I was feeling that lovely but ever so slight numbness that made me all but forget about that insane

lady and her chocolate wolflab! Oooh, it was a mighty fight...that damn wolflab nearly drowned me with slobber! I quietly chuckled.

I picked up a half rack of Summer Ale as it was decidedly the perfect beer for a bonfire at the glacier to welcome spring and headed on my way.

I got to Skaters Cabin before anyone else and sat down on the retaining wall to enjoy the view. The cabin is a one room stone structure that has been out by the Mendenhall Glacier forever...practically. It has a huge fireplace inside with a massive firebox and makes for an excellent place to warm oneself when ice skating in the winter time. It also has a wonderful porch and outside fire ring that is just about perfect for roaring campfires of a size to satisfy most pyros! All of this while facing the most perfect view, in my humble opinion, of the Mendenhall Glacier. On this most perfect of evenings the view was completely stunning.

Well, I was about halfway through my beer when the party arrived! Jasmine and all of her fellow hairdressers swooped in and before I knew it the pallets were in the fire

ring and the flames were climbing higher and higher! By the way...pallet fires are all the rage in Alaska.

The drinks were flowing and the hotdogs were sizzling and the girls were all comparing their current or former boyfriends' manhood to the size of the hotdogs they were shoving on wire hangers and burning to a crisp. I was of course glad to know that I measured up to and exceeded the hotdog standard but was still quite uncomfortable with the whole skewering and burning in effigy thing that was happening!

The evening was progressing quite nicely and I choked down my last hotdog. The earlier image was just a little too unsettling for me and I made the switch to water as I knew I would have to drive home in a while. If you have not figured it out yet, I was the only dude there.

Well, the girls all continued to talk about their days and about who was screwing who and about who was a bastard and who was cute. I continued to get more and more lost in the flames of the fire and how the full moon was starting to come into view when

the Ipod came out and the girls started to dance around the fire. I stayed for a few songs...after all this pagan ritual was coming full circle. Then they started to take off their clothes! Now if I were single...no question about it I would have stayed and probably joined them in the debauchery but alas I am an old dude and I am very much in love with my wife Cindy and she is all the woman I need. I decided it was time to let the wild bunch have their fun and exit stage left. Besides I was starting to feel like that line from that old Jethro Tull song, "Sitting on a park bench...eying little girls with bad intent!" Yep it was time to leave...but it was a fantastic day!

So I played the old man card and started my way to the truck when Mother Nature called and said, "Hey you...time to return that beer! It was only rented you know."

So I made my way down the trail to the public toilet. To call it a public toilet makes it sound so civilized...so urbane. In actuality it was nothing more than what Cindy calls a "shit pit", a fancy hole in the ground with the coldest stainless steel toilet you have ever seen and the lovely aroma of,

well, shit! And I would have loved that shit pit but for some reason when I got there the damn door was locked! Too early in the season I supposed but now I would have to drain my dragon in the wild. So to speak. So I snuck off into the woods a little further and found the perfect tree for this communion with nature and began the deed.

I heard a twig snap behind me and thought, "Great here comes one of the girls!" But the snap gave way to an entire rush of leafless willow branches rustling and busting and the lowest guttural growl I had ever heard.

"Oh shit!" I yelled and turned fully expecting to see a bear that had just awakened from his winter slumber charging at me but to my surprise and horror it was the biggest, meanest wolf I had ever seen! Everything went into slow motion. I went for my knife and screamed, "Oh, Mother Fucking Shit!" and the damn thing was on me.

I shoved my left forearm in its mouth to keep it from biting my face or throat and started stabbing it anywhere my knife could penetrate!

The sound was straight from hell! Low and booming and the pain was beyond explanation. The scrapping of tooth on bone, the snarling, the hot steamy breath and the eyes...the cold piercing blue eyes that cut through my soul and burned my heart just like a laser! I kept stabbing and screaming. It just would not relent! Fear and surprise gave way to resolution and agony! I fought but I knew it was just a matter of time before I was dead!

That hell hound lunged again and we both fell backward stumbling and collapsing. I just kept stabbing. The last thing I remember was a flash of light then total darkness as my head struck a rock!

I awoke three days later in Bartlett Hospital. Much to my surprise I was still alive! I hurt like hell but was still here.

The doctor came in and welcomed me back to the world of the living and asked if I remembered anything. I related the above story and he said, "You're one lucky dude! And you are quite famous. When you feel better Cindy can read you the newspaper article."

Headline: Two Men Found Wounded In Skaters Cabin Area

On Tuesday evening, a Juneau resident identified as Kevin Burchfield was attacked by what appears to be a wolf in the Skaters Cabin area. The incident occurred at about 9 p.m. Witnesses saw a wolf or large dog leaving the scene of the attack. Mr. Burchfield remains in critical condition at Bartlett Hospital.

In an unrelated story, a body was discovered in the Mendenhall Campground on Wednesday morning with an undetermined number of stab wounds. The man was pronounced dead at the scene. His identity is being withheld until he is identified and family is notified.

Juneau Police Department is still investigating this case. Foul play is suspected.