After their mother had repeated for the twentieth time that she'd like the boys to have "a taste of nature," Carter and Rodney decided that maybe they could feign enthusiasm for a camping trip after all. However, by the time they got three hours away from the city, set up the tents and turned off their CD player, they had decided nature wasn't so bad. Accustomed to their noisy Hamilton neighbourhood, they were in awe of the overwhelming night-time silence.

Until they heard a loud rustling sound outside their tent, that is.

"Ugh, huh?" Carter snorted as he jolted awake. He turned to shake his older brother, but Rodney was already up. "What's that?" whispered Carter. He raised his voice a little. "Mum?"

The only answer was an even louder crunching that sounded like footsteps. "There's somebody out there!" gulped Carter, panic edging into his voice "That's not somebody, that's something," Rodney whispered authoritatively. "That's not human. It must be a bear."

They could just make out each other's wide-open eyes. "Should we, uh, get Mum?" Carter asked. "But her tent is over on the other side of the bear," said Rodney. "Besides, I've been taking the train all the way to Toronto by myself for five years. I can handle this." He felt around the tent for his torch. "Remember that nature documentary on TV? We'll make a lot of noise and scare him away." Carter nodded reluctantly.

They quietly eased the tent zipper open, then turned on the torch, jumped out of the tent and started whooping.

Looking up at where the bear's face should be, they saw only darkness. They looked down. There, in front of them, was a mother raccoon and her three babies, eyes blinking in the sudden brightness. Behind them were the remains of the family's food -- sandwich crusts, apple cores and an empty potato-chip bag.

The brothers looked at one another sheepishly as the fearsome predators sauntered away with the rest of tomorrow's lunch. "Uh," Rodney mumbled, "maybe we don't need to tell Mum about this..."