

Joe Kupernik
A Swift Current

The Madison River, flows through the Rocky Mountains like a great white snake, twisting and turning towards all points of the compass. Jeff and his father Scott had been planning this fishing trip for many years. It was especially special because they were leaving on Scott's birthday, May seventeenth. The trip was a realization of a life time for Scott who was an accomplished fly fisher and had as a young man dreamed of fishing on the grand Madison River. For Jeff however this was not of the same significance, as his father had taken him on many fishing trips in his life and he had already been on more great western rivers than Scott.

It was on a warm day Jeff and Scott left on their adventure taking the family minivan, which was packed to the ceiling. The trip would extend May seventeenth through the twenty eighth, a ten day excursion that would no doubt test their vigor and endurance. They had decided to camp in a different campsite every night depending on whether the fishing was good. The first night wasn't very memorable the father and son arrived in camp at ten o'clock pm. It was a long dark set up as there was very little moonlight and much cloud cover, but the men were very capable and experience in this kind of work. Finally as they slipped into their sleeping bags drifting off to sleep to the pattering sound of rain there was a mutual sense of excitement.

As a dazzling sun rose above the mountains in the east, the duo was occupied with gathering sticks, twigs, and kindling to start a fire. After breakfast they walked down to the riverside to investigate. Later that day Scott was making coffee when a loud cry rang out from the river "fish!" "Fish!". Naturally Scott jumped up and raced over with his fishing pole. As he rounded the last bend and came into sight of the river he beheld an awesome sight. Looking down into the deep pool of calm water he could see tens if not hundreds of fish, some jumping out of the water to catch flies sitting on top of the water, and some swimming around waiting for their meal to come to them. In the midst of the feeding frenzy Jeff was fighting a fish seaming to be strong enough to snap his 8lbs. test line. Stunned for only a moment Scott's face sprang into a beaming smile as he jumped down the bank and threw his line in the river. Whap! Within thirty seconds of fishing Scott had a fish. In high spirits as the men returned to camp with two very large fish, mouths watering. This continued for the next two days almost like clockwork.

On the forth morning the father and son decided to move camp upstream to a new section of the river scouted out the day before. After packing up camp and their packs the men started trekking upstream. When they reached the new camp or a spot that was fit to camp as there were no designated campsites, a felling of anticipation and anxiety set in. That night the men slept well only for the reason of fatigue. Upon the sun's warm rays and smell of bacon and eggs Jeff rose out of his tent. After breakfast Jeff wanted to fish right away whereas Scott was more interested in scouting the river. After a debate over the two conflicting views Jeff decided to go fish by himself. Scott was about two

Wilderness House Literary Review 6/1

miles upstream when he heard a loud indistinguishable yell assuming it as nothing more than the past four days he ignored the sound. However after five minutes of hearing the same noise Scott began to worry. Moving back down the river towards the camp, the sound became more desirable "help". Now realizing his fear Scott broke into a run and leaving everything broke through the underbrush and saw his son half way through the river the swirling current inches from the top of his waders. Carefully moving towards Jeff he called out for his son not to move. Upon reaching Jeff he immediately realized what had happened, whereas the water only came up to his waste a foot away Jeff was almost drowned. Reaching out and grabbing Jeff he pulled hard and slowly but surely helped the boy out of the hole. Just as Jeff stepped foot on higher ground the rock Scott was standing on collapsed and he fell still holding his sons hand into the same deep hole. Now it was his sons turn to help, as he pulled his father out of the depth both men felt shaken realizing how close to floating away they had come. The men slept well that night feeling a sense of comfort in their warm dry tents.

For the remainder of the expedition the two men continued to catch and eat two fish a night. As well as being far more careful the men never fished alone, learning from their own mistakes. When the men returned to their home in Arvada Co, they would have quite a tale to tell. Jeff had never felt the same kind of admiration for his father, nor had his father ever been so proud of his son. Both realizing that no words needed to be said discussed politics and future fishing trips all the way home.