

Introduction: Bruce the Moose

WELCOME TO CAMP MOOSE-ON-THE-LOOSE

Bruce: Well, well, well. Just look at all you people here today! Welcome to Camp Moose-on-the-Loose. My name is Bruce—Bruce the Moose! I'm so glad you decided to spend some time here in the wilderness with me and all the other forest creatures. Yep, all kinds of creatures call this forest home—both big ones and small ones—so you need to make sure you're always alert. You never know who might be watching us or hiding in one of these trees.

I love the forest where I live. I love to look around at all these beautiful trees! They're so important to life here on this planet. Some of the animals in this forest live in the trees. Other animals use the trees for food. Plus, all these trees take energy from the sunlight and then produce oxygen, which is something that every living creature needs to survive! Yep, this forest is truly an amazing place!

Every day here is an adventure. Plus, there are all sorts of fun things to do. You can hike the trails, paddle a canoe across the lake, roast marshmallows over the campfire, and stare up at the sky full of stars at night. This really is a beautiful place to be. But even out here, it's important to be prepared. Most folks come with their backpacks full of important things to help them out as they explore the forest. Each day I'm going to be here to talk about something important to have with you on a camping adventure. It's going to be great!

I'm looking forward to our fun camping adventure together! Come back and see me again soon, ya' hear?

Introduction

PINECONE SOUP

Ranger Beth enters.

Beth: *(Nervously pacing.)* Those new Junior Rangers are supposed to be here by now. I don't know where on earth they could be. We have a lot to do this week. I don't have time to wait around.

Aspen and Dusty enter. Ranger Beth has her back to them and does not see them enter. Aspen carries a small camera. Dusty is carrying a cell phone.

Dusty & Aspen: *(Saluting.)* Junior Rangers reporting for duty!

Beth: *(Turning.)* There you are! You're a minute late.

Dusty: Actually *(looking up)*, according to the position of the sun, we are fifteen and one half seconds early. I suggest you reset your timekeeping device accordingly.

Aspen: Oh, Dusty, stop being so precise about everything. Just look around you at the beauty of all God created! What an amazing place to spend a week! *(Remembering that Beth is there.)* Oh! Where are my manners? You must be Ranger Beth. I'm Aspen. *(Motioning toward Dusty.)* He's Dusty.

Dusty: Affirmative!

Beth: Glad you're here. We've got a lot of work to do here, and you have a very important role as Junior Rangers. Now the chief responsibility of a Junior Ranger is—

Dusty & Aspen: To protect the forest and its inhabitants.

Beth: *(Surprised.)* Um, yes. To protect the inhabitants and its forest. I mean, to inspect the forest and it's . . . um, what you said.

Aspen: We've already studied the Junior Ranger Handbook.

Dusty: Yeah *(holding up his phone)*, and I even downloaded a copy onto my phone so that I'll always have it handy.

Beth: The handbook is on your phone? Well, I like to do things the old-fashioned way. I always carry my trusty Ranger Handbook around in my back pocket. Right next to my compass.

Dusty: I've got a compass on my phone too. It's an app.

Beth: A map? I always keep one of those in my backpack.

Aspen: Not a map. An app!

Dusty: Uh . . . but I do have a map on my phone as well. It's a map app.

Beth: An app map. I mean, a map app. Very interesting. Well, that'll come in handy as we explore the forest. The last thing we want is for someone to get lost.

Dusty: I have a very keen sense of direction and a photographic memory. My chances of getting lost are infinitesimal.

Beth: Infini-what?

Dusty: That means “very small.”

Aspen: I just can’t wait to go out into the forest and see all the beauty of nature! I’m going to take pictures of everything I see! All the unique plants and trees and wildlife. (*Snaps a picture.*) Oh, like that tree over there. (*Gasps.*) And look at this unique insect right here.

Dusty: (*Looking down.*) Hmm. *Dendroctonus ponderosae*, also known as—

Beth: The mountain pine beetle.

Dusty: Precisely.

During the following exchange, Mossy quietly enters the far side of the stage.

Aspen: (*Turning toward where Mossy will enter.*) Oh, and look at that strange looking pile of moss over there. (*Snaps a picture.*)

Dusty: (*Looking.*) Um, I don’t think that’s a pile of moss. It kind of looks like . . . (*a bit unsure*) a man.

Bruce enters and stands with Mossy.

Aspen: You’re right! And is that a moose I see with him?

Beth: There’s only one man I know who looks like a pile of moss and hangs around with a moose.

Mossy: (*Moves toward the group, acting excited.*) Hello there, Junior Rangers. Name’s Pete. Pete Moss. But folks just call me Mossy.

Aspen: (*Pointing at Bruce.*) And who is . . . that?

Bruce: Oh, I’m just Bruce.

Dusty: Bruce the Moose?

Mossy: You got it! Bruce the Moose! Hey, you know what? That rhymes! (*Chuckles.*) I never noticed that before! Bruce the Moose!

Bruce: Mossy can be a bit strange sometimes. That’s why I follow him around a lot. It’s good to have someone keeping an eye on him.

Beth: So, Moose the Bruce . . . I, I mean, Bruce the Moose. What brings you two out this way?

Bruce: Oh, we’re just gathering up some pinecones to make our famous pinecone soup.

Beth: Pinecone soup?

Mossy: You betcha! Mmm. Crunchy!

Dusty: I don't think soup is supposed to be crunchy.

Bruce: It is when he makes it.

Mossy: You can come back to my cave and try some.

Aspen: You live in a cave?

Mossy: Yep. I just love being in the wilderness. Livin' off the land. Watchin' over God's creatures.

Bruce: Actually, he's the one that needs watchin'.

Beth: Well, we're going to be spending the week camping out here in the wilderness too. We're going to be doing all sorts of things to help take care of the forest and keep it beautiful.

Mossy: That's far out!

Dusty: Precisely. We'll be quite a distance from any civilization. So, "far out" is exactly where we'll be.

Beth: We'd better head for camp. We've got a busy day tomorrow, so we need to get some rest.

Mossy: And I've got to go finish makin' my pinecone soup. You sure you don't want any?

All 3: That's okay.

Mossy: Suit yourself. Come on, Bruce. I think the cave is this way. *(Points into the distance.)*

Bruce: Actually, it's that way. *(Points the opposite direction.)*

Mossy: Oh yeah! You're right.

Bruce: Don't worry. I'll get him home.

Mossy and Bruce exit.

Aspen: Speaking of home, where is our campsite?

Beth: Well, it's . . .

Dusty: It's precisely 372 yards due west of here. I've already got the coordinates programmed into my—

Beth: *(Begins before Dusty finishes.)* I know, I know. Your app map.

Dusty: Actually, it's a map app.

Beth: Isn't that what I said?

Aspen, Beth, and Dusty exit, still debating.