

SURVIVALIST FICTION



THE WINDS OF CHANGE: Shortly After Y2K – Birth of a Raider

by Old Bear

The following short stories are for entertainment purposes only. The stories are purposely out of chronological order. You can read any story in any order you would like. Any resemblance to real people, living or dead, is coincidence. I am not a good enough writer to have planned it.

Shortly After Y2K - Birth of a Raider

Three men, their faces showing several days growth of beard sat around a small, smokey campfire. Their wives sat nearby, looking cleaner, if more sullen than the men. Several small children milled around the camp site, which consisted of five back packing tents and two sport utility "bug out" vehicles. They had camped near a small stream. Downed tree branches had provided enough wood for their fire, but by now they were having to go farther to gather wood. Empty food wrappers littered the area. It was supposed to be the job of the oldest children to dispose of these, but this had not been enforced.

The men sat together and talked in low voices. They had expected that after some rioting in the inner city, things would be restored to normal. They had seen what had seemed like a reasonable amount of food (mostly MRE's) quickly diminish as the days went on and the news from their hand crank radio continued to be bad. Returning to their homes right now did not seem to be an option. This morning they had cooked and eaten the dog belonging to one of the families. Nobody had eaten enough. It was a small dog.

Ralph thought that they should approach a farmer and ask for food for their families. Steve and Dennis were not sure. Raised in the city, they had an unreasonable fear of rural folk. What if they shot first and asked questions after? They had at first tried hunting, but the area, known for it's game, seemed devoid of wildlife. In three days they had managed to kill two squirrels and a blue jay.

Lacking any better ideas, it was agreed that they would ask the closest farmer for food. Perhaps they could do some work to pay for it. Leaving the camp behind, they walked toward the farm that they had seen on their way in. Gasoline was

now a premium item they would not waste. At the edge of the woods they stopped to observe the farm house. "I don't think we should all go up there together," Ralph said. "No sense making the farmer nervous."

"Maybe you had better leave your rifle here too," Steve offered. "We can sort of cover you from here, if there is trouble."

"There won't be any trouble," snapped Ralph. "I am just going to explain our situation and ask for a little food." Leaving his AR-15 with his friends, Ralph walked across the barren field toward the farmhouse. The old white farm house was well cared for and showed fairly new painting. As he drew nearer Ralph observed several large chickens wandering inside a fenced in area, with what he decided must be a chicken house attached. "Eggs!" thought Ralph. "They have so much, surely they will let us have some," he thought. When he had gone about as close as he thought was correct Ralph yelled "Hello. Anybody home?" An older man and two rather small dogs appeared from inside one of the buildings. The dogs began to bark and the man held a shotgun in his hands. Ralph's sudden fear began to subside when the man did not start firing immediately. The man walked toward Ralph who waited for him to get nearer, not wanting to have to shout. When they were about ten feet apart, the farmer told Ralph to "turn around slowly.". When Ralph wanted to know why, the farmer said it was so he could see if Ralph had a hidden gun. Ralph turned and the farmer looked.

"This is stupid," thought Ralph. "If I did have a hide out gun, this old geezer would never know it."

The farmer got right to the point. "This is my land and it is posted no trespassing and no hunting. What are you doing here and what do you want?"

Ralph felt his anger rise "Why this old goat! I make enough money in six months to buy and sell this too-bit farm." Trying to keep his true feelings out of his voice Ralph explained the situation and the need for food for their families. The farmer told him that he had to think of his family first and that they might not even have enough food put away for themselves. When Ralph pointed out the chickens and asked for just a couple of them, the farmer went into a tirade about his family needing enough food in case next year's crops did poorly and a lot of other stuff that simply made no sense to Ralph. By this time next year all the hardships would just be memories and the economy would be back on course. Ralph was

not surprised that this dirt farmer would have almost no knowledge about how our interconnected system really worked.

"Need food in case next year's crops did poorly, what a crock of ****," thought Ralph. When Ralph tried to explain why things would be back to normal long before the crops of the next year could be important, the farmer just snorted and accused Ralph of not knowing where the food came from in the first place. During this conversation, Ralph and the farmer had been unconsciously moving closer together and had begun to gesture more. When the farmer told Ralph that he simply could not give, sell or trade him any food, because his family "might need it", Ralph went ballistic. He screamed that his family "did need" the food, right now, and not at some imagined time in the distant future! Advancing, Ralph got close to the farmer's face. The farmer took a couple of steps backward and raised his gun menacingly. "You get off my land right now. Get and don't come back," he yelled, with the old veins bulging in his forehead. From the wood line Steve and Dennis could hear the sound of voices, occasionally rising in anger, but could not make out many of the words. All Steve knew was that the farmer had raised his gun. Ralph decided that he had used the wrong approach. He should not have belittled this man's fears, no matter how unfounded they really were. Based on his poor education, this man was doing the best he could to understand events that were hopelessly beyond him. As Ralph opened his mouth to speak, a shot sounded from the woods. Ralph actually could hear the sickening, slapping sound the bullet made. He saw the look of surprise come into the farmer's eyes for a split second, before the man grabbed his chest and pitched over backwards, fertilizing his fields with his own blood.

Steve claimed that he was sure the farmer was about to shoot Ralph and had only shot to protect him. Ralph had to admit that the shotgun had been more or less pointed at him and the old man had been awfully upset. For some reason, he would never later understand, Ralph picked up the farmer's shotgun and the three of them walked toward the house. They could never later recall when or how the decision was made not to leave any witnesses behind. The eleven-year-old girl was the hardest. After that it just got easier.