

Never Cry Wolf Study Guide

Never Cry Wolf by Farley Mowat

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Plot Summary

In *Never Cry Wolf*, by Farley Mowat, the author begins by recounting how he expressed an interest in living biology at age five when he first discovered two catfish in a stagnant pond near his grandmother's home in Ontario. When he completed his schooling, he was engaged by the Department of Mines and Resources to investigate the problems of the decreasing deer population, presumed to have been as a result of an out of control wolf population. *Never Cry Wolf* is a scientific account of what Mowat discovers as a result of his study of wolves.

Mowat's journey into the world of wolves changes everything he believes and has been told about them and their behavior. Before he leaves for his study, he is told that wolves are decimating the caribou population, killing them indiscriminately for sport. He is also under the impression that they will attack and kill a considerable number of men each year, but they will not touch Eskimo women who are pregnant. Told that wolves number as many as thirty thousand in the region of his studies, Farley expects the population to be thick in the area of his observations, but none of these things are true. The reality he soon learns is that the trappers are killing far more wolves each year to feed their husky teams than the wolves kill – up to three hundred a year each. The wolves, on the other hand, subsist on a diet of mainly mice. They hunt caribou as well, but only take the weak, the injured, or the sick, leaving the caribou stronger for their intervention. They do not kill men, and, in fact, they presented little threat to Farley despite his presence near their den, close to their young and around their food. He even camps near a wolf den to better study them with their pups. Even this close contact doesn't promote aggression from the wolves. He spends summer and fall following the wolf family around, all without threat to him. The final confirmation of this occurs when he crawls into their den at the end of the season, expecting it to be empty. He comes into face to face contact with the female wolf and one of her pups. She doesn't so much as growl at him, despite the fact that he had crawled into her den.

On the other hand, hunters and trappers did their level best to kill off as many wolves as possible with the not so silent endorsement of the governments – both federal and provincial. The government provides a bounty for each wolf returned, and encourages safaris that kill entire groups of wolves and caribou with impunity. It is barbaric and unnecessary, but there is no way that he can convince the government of the realities of the situation. *Never Cry Wolf* is a touching and sometimes heartbreaking account of wolves and the struggles they face.

The hardest realization that Farley faces is the moment when he realizes that had he been armed when he investigated the wolves' den just before leaving, he might have given in to his fear and actually killed the female and her cub simply because they terrified him in that moment. He understands in that moment that his observations will change nothing.



Chapter 1: The Lupine Project

Summary

Farley Mowat began expressing an interest in living biology at age five when he first discovered two catfish in a stagnant pond near his grandmother's home in Ontario. This childhood event foreshadowed his future scientific endeavors as an adult. When he completed his schooling, he was engaged by the Department of Mines and Resources to investigate the problems of the decreasing deer population, presumed to have been the result of an out of control wolf population. No one had considered the fact that hunters outnumbered deer by five to one at the time. Farley Mowat's investigation took him to Churchill and then beyond to the subarctic Barren Lands.

Analysis

Farley Mowat has a difficult time settling into a career choice at first, although his path would have seemed quite clear had he considered the things that interested him from childhood onward. It all began, as near as he can discern, with the discovery of a couple of catfish he found in a stagnant pool near his grandmother's home. He was fascinated by them, so he took them home. He became even more interested in them because they stubbornly refused to die, even when deprived of their pool of water.

His first real mentor was a Scotsman who was an amateur 'mammalogist' who studied pocket gophers in his spare time. Later influences included professional biologists, one of whom knew more about the uterine scars in shrews than anyone else alive. His training as an academic was more difficult, however when he learned that most on that path only studied animals after their death. As an aspiring biologist, he had always interpreted the field to mean the study of animal life. His future is set when he is called upon by the Dominion Wildlife Service to conduct a study on wolves and asked to report to Ottawa. During his orientation, he is assured that the problem of wolves stemmed from constituents like the fish and game clubs who are convinced that the wolf population is the cause of the receding deer population. They are overlooking that fact that hunters outnumbered deer five to one. Mowat is charged with putting an end to what they assure him is an intolerable situation. He is sent to Churchill where he will secure transportation further into the wilds.

Discussion Question 1

What first influenced Farley in his childhood as far as career paths go?

Discussion Question 2

Who are Farley's first mentors? What part of their studies confused him most?



Discussion Question 3

Why is Farley called to Ottawa? What is expected of him?

Vocabulary

formidable, exasperated, expenditure, peregrinations, infatuation, narcissism, aberrations, predilections, obeisance



Chapter 2: Wolf Juice

Summary

Farley and the gear the government decides he'll need are loaded onto an Air Force transport. The plane is a twin engine capable of carrying thirty. However, by the time his equipment is on board, there is barely room to take Farley, the pilot, and the crew. He is outfitted with one third of a collapsible canoe, armaments including tear gas grenades and potassium cyanide charges, grain alcohol for preservation of specimen stomachs, seven axes, skis, snowshoes, and more. Finally, there is barely room for Farley, the pilot, and co-pilot to wedge themselves in for the flight to Churchill.

From there, he is tasked with chartering a plane to take him deeper into the wilderness where he is to establish a base near an adequate wolf population. The instructions, vague at best, do not include much direction, and the only pilot in Churchill doesn't believe him when he tries to engage him to fly him to an unknown location to camp with wolves. He tries to contact Ottawa for instructions, but he is told to limit his contact to important business only. He's also told that a progress report would be expected in two weeks. While waiting for another pilot to return to the area, Farley settles into the local hotel and interviews a variety of people about wolves, all of whom claimed to be authorities on the subject. Among the most important things he learns is from a trapper who introduces him to 'wolf juice' which is a mixture of Moose Brand Beer and locally brewed antifreeze alcohol. He secures several gallons of the Moose Brand to take with him, along with formaldehyde to replace the grain alcohol.

Analysis

The Air Force pilot and co-pilot are both bewildered and dying of curiosity as they help him load the gear he has been provided with. Farley says little as they load his gear, only mildly disturbed by the fact he had only been given one third of the collapsible canoe, enough armament to repel a small nation, and crates of gear as yet unidentified. On the flight north, they lose one engine which distracts the crew enough that they don't ask him about his intentions until they land. Neither believes his answer. When he tries to make the arrangements to go deeper into the wilderness from Churchill, he is met with considerable skepticism. He is unable to convince the lone pilot in the area at that time to take him. He contacts Ottawa to be severely rebuked for sending superfluous radio messages without due cause and informed his first progress report is due in two weeks. While he waits for the return of another pilot to the area, he interviews local experts on wolves who assure him that the species eat several hundred people each year in the Arctic Zone, but they never attack a pregnant Eskimo. The locals also tell him that the wolves shed their entire skins once every four years. Supposedly, each wolf kills thousands of caribou yearly simply out of bloodlust. If he's bitten, he should bite back. He is also introduced to 'wolf-juice,' which he begins to like. He includes it in his gear when he finally secures a pilot to take him further into the wilderness.



Discussion Question 1

What kind of gear is issued to Farley?

Discussion Question 2

What difficulties does he have when he gets to Churchill and why?

Discussion Question 3

What 'valuable' information does Farley learn about wolves in Churchill before leaving?

Vocabulary

superfluous, inscrutable, contretemps, impertinence, intriguing, antipathy, lamentable



Chapter 3: Happy Landings

Summary

Farley finally leaves Churchill during the last week in May in a plane operated by an ex-R.A.F. pilot from Yellowknife. Luckily, he is able to trade a gallon of alcohol for a seventeen foot canoe which they lash to the underneath of the plane, and in it he hides the Moose Brand that had been considered non-essential and set aside to assure that they would be able to take off. When the plane is unable to do so, the pilot leaves behind his 'reserve' drums of fuel and they are able to get airborne after a few mechanical and environmental stutters. The pilot takes him about three hundred miles northwest of Churchill and leaves him on a frozen lake with all of his gear assuring him that he'll return in the fall sometime, although there are lots of Eskimo around who will return him sooner if he desires.

Analysis

Farley's forced stay in Churchill ends when the weather finally cooperates enough that a plane finally arrives and the pilot is willing to take him further into the wilderness. Problems with the plane delayed their departure . A short thaw froze them to the ground, and issues arose with the hydraulics of the landing gear. The overall weight of Farley's gear made it impossible to take off until the pilot left his spare fuel behind. Although unable to gain much altitude, the pilot cheerfully took Farley on a three hour journey which ended when he reached the extent of his fuel's capability. After a quick unloading of the gear, Farley was left about three hundred miles northwest of Churchill.

Discussion Question 1

What confounds the pilot when he tries to take off with Farley and his gear in an effort to take him to his study site? Who is responsible?

Discussion Question 2

How does the pilot decide where to drop Farley? What part did Farley play in that decision, even if unknowingly?

Discussion Question 3

What failsafe exists should the pilot be unable to return for Farley in the fall as planned? At what location is Farley dropped?

Vocabulary

resuscitated, inauspicious, recalcitrant, confounded, aeronautical, lethargic



Chapter 4: When Is a Wolf Not a Wolf?

Summary

After the plane departs, Farley takes stock. His gear is more than he can move off the frozen lake on his own. His instructions are to establish a permanent base and, by utilizing waterways, to make a survey of the area. This is impossible. So, he sets up the portable radio as per the enclosed instructions to seek consultation with Ottawa, but the only person he is able to contact is a radio operator in Peru who agrees to relay a message to Ottawa for him. Farley keeps it to a ten word minimum as instructed, only months later learning of the crisis it caused. This is only partially because the message identifies him as Varley Monfat. It was a problem because it appeared to be in code. It is sent to External Affairs and then to the Ministry of Defense. It is only sheer luck that someone deciphers the message. The reply insists that he return from Tierra del Fuego immediately. Farley never receives the entire message because the batteries for his radio last only six hours, and the only other station he picks up is broadcasting music from Moscow. After sending the message, he becomes aware of a wolf pack in full cry, heading in his direction. Having read that a wolf pack can contain up to forty individuals, he is unnerved – especially as night is approaching. He turns his canoe upside down and hides underneath, wishing he were a pregnant Eskimo as the pack surrounds him. A deafening chorus of barks and yelps circle the canoe, and he is sure he is hallucinating when a voice roars loudly amid the chaos. Then, silence follows. He carefully looks out to see dozens of feet and then a pair of feet that do not belong to a wolf. He sticks out his head, and he is looking into the face of a young man dressed in caribou furs, surrounded by a pack of fourteen Huskies. There isn't a wolf in sight.

Analysis

After the plane leaves, Farley looks around and there is no question that he is in prime wolf country. Farley didn't know it, but he had been dropped in the heart of Keewatin Barren Lands. His instructions are to establish a permanent base, and using waterways, make a general survey of the country to determine the range to population ratio of *Canus lupus*. Already he is unable to continue as the waterways are still iced over, and he has no way of transporting his gear to a permanent base on land. He has no choice but to set up his portable radio and attempt to make contact with Ottawa again. He manages to make contact with a man in Peru who agrees to forward a message for him, but had no way of knowing the stir his message, though short, would cause. Not only did the message come from another country entirely, involving everyone from the Department of External Affairs to the Department of Defense, but it appeared to be in code of some sort and was signed as being from an individual named Varley Monfat. In a surprising twist, someone realizes who the author likely is, and a message is immediately sent demanding he return to Ottawa. The message never reaches Farley, whose radio batteries only lasted six hours. The next issue he faces is what to do when he hears his first pack of wolves howling nearby. Feeling horribly exposed and



outnumbered, he hides under his canoe until he discovers the wolf pack he heard was actually a team of huskies led by a young man dressed in caribou furs. Fourteen huskies surround them, but not a single wolf.

Discussion Question 1

What do Farley's instructions insist he do now that he has landed, and why is it impossible to carry these instructions out?

Discussion Question 2

What phenomenon interferes with Farley's ability to get further instructions via radio and what is the outcome?

Discussion Question 3

What sound does Farley hear as it is getting dark, and what conclusions does he draw from the sheer volume of the sound?

Vocabulary

speculative, adhered, deferred, initiative, emanating, admonitions, fortuitous

Chapter 5: Contact!

Summary

The young man is a trapper named Mike, who is part Eskimo and part white. He is alone, other than his team of huskies and a small band of Eskimos (including his mother) who lives seventy miles north. Farley makes a deal to use his 'cabin' as a base, and Mike and his team of huskies help him to get his gear there. He maintains his distance, watching warily as Farley unpacks the various scientific tools supplied as his field laboratory. Farley shows him some of it, explaining how it works. However, when he shows him his collection of autopsy tools and explains their purpose using photos from a book, Mike suddenly realizes his mother is ill and has to leave. Farley is too preoccupied to consider how Mike could have known his mother was ill. Instead, he concentrates on his surroundings.

After a short tour of the immediate area, he is surprised to find a plethora of caribou bones. He assumes, since researchers in Churchill assure him trappers do not shoot caribou, they were all killed by wolves. Based on amount, wolves must kill about twenty million caribou each year just in Keewatin. Three days later, he ventures further out, and he can't understand why the density of bones decreases and why wolves would kill so many caribou close to the only human habitation.

Spring melt water soon jams, and the river overflows into the cabin. When it recedes, debris is a foot thick, so Farley pitches his tent on a ridge above. That night, he hears whimpers and howls he interprets as coming from one of Mike's younger huskies that has been separated from the rest and gotten lost. He follows the sound, crossing the river in his canoe and working his way up the far bank, trying not to frighten it. At the crest of the ridge, he lies down and cautiously peers over the edge to find himself face to face with a full grown wolf less than six feet from him. The wolf recovers first, leaping up and running away. He vanishes from sight in seconds. Farley's reaction is similar, returning to the river and paddling as fast as he can back across the river where he spends the night sleeping on the table in Mike's cabin.

Analysis

Farley meets the lone, young trapper named Mike, who is part Eskimo and part white. Farley and the trapper strike a deal for Farley to use the trapper's cabin as a base. Mike's huskies will help him get his gear there. The trapper watches Farley from a distance as Farley unpacks his scientific equipment. As he shows Mike the various tools and how they work, Mike realizes that his mother is ill. She is seventy miles north of the cabin, so he must leave. Farley doesn't stop to think about how Mike could know that his mother was ill.



Farley takes a tour of the immediate area, and he finds many caribou bones. Since he has been told by researchers in Churchill that trappers do not shoot caribou, he assumes that they were all killed by wolves. Based on the amount of bones, Farley surmises that the wolves must kill about twenty million caribou each year just in Keewatin. Three days later, he explores further out from camp. Oddly, the number of bones decreases. He doesn't understand why the wolves would have killed so many caribou within such close proximity to the only human habitation.

The river overflows into the cabin in the spring. Once the water recedes, there is so much debris that Farley relocates his tent on a ridge. He hears whimpers and howls that night. Assuming that it is one of Mike's husky pups that has strayed, he follows the sound. He lies down cautiously and peers over the ridge's edge. He finds himself face to face with a full grown wolf. It is less than six feet from him. The wolf runs away quickly and vanishes in seconds. Farley returns to Mike's cabin as quickly as possible. He sleeps on the table in Mike's cabin.

Discussion Question 1

What is fortuitous about Farley's first contact? How is he received and why?

Discussion Question 2

What is the response when Farley attempts to share his scientific methods with Mike?

Discussion Question 3

Under what circumstances does Farley meet his first wolf? How do Farley and the wolf respond to each other?

Vocabulary

compensations, adversely, expenditure, implications, inveigled, misconstrued



Chapter 6: The Den

Summary

He doesn't get much sleep, and by morning he has convinced himself that he has missed an opportunity. He decides to return to the spot of his encounter. He is pleased, though unprepared, for the footprints he finds measuring six inches in diameter. They combine to make a forty inch stride. He returns to the cabin and rereads the information he has, confirming that some wolves weigh in at up to one hundred and seventy pounds and measure up to almost nine feet from nose tip to tail tip, standing as high as forty two inches at the shoulders. The next morning, Farley finds his compass and decides to again try to make contact. He follows the wolf's tracks through a bog and loses the trail on the other side. He stops for lunch and scans the area with his binoculars seeing something move in the distance. He heads in that direction, and he is stunned to discover that what he sees are two wolves that appear to be playing tag. He watches them cavort until the female suddenly vanishes into a dark spot. Excited, he ventures closer until the male spies him and faces him off, transforming himself into a vigilant threat. Farley withdraws, walking backwards up the slope until the male settles himself into a restful pose.

Analysis

Farley tries to sleep on the table in the cabin that night, but sleep eludes him. Excited by his contact, he makes his way back there the next day, and is quite unnerved by the size of animal he'd seen. He goes back to the cabin and cleans it out, and then taking a compass, returns once again to search for the subjects of his investigation. He tracks the prints for some time but it isn't until he stops for lunch and scans the area with binoculars that he sees them for the first time. At first, all he sees is their tails behind a crest and doesn't recognize them for what they are, but when he gets closer, he realizes that he is looking at two wolves at play. It doesn't take long for him to recognize one as the male he'd come face to face with, and a female, and he is overjoyed when the female disappears into a nearby den. When the male notices him, Farley watches him go from a playful dog to a menacing threat, and Farley quickly backs away from the area. He is glad to see that his proximity hasn't disturbed them so much that they leave the area.

Discussion Question 1

What first impressions does Farley take away from his first encounter?



Discussion Question 2

What stuns Farley when he sees the two wolves for the first time together and why is this such a surprise?

Discussion Question 3

What does Farley notice and what change occurs in the male as a result?

Vocabulary

indelibly, dismember, reciprocating, perfunctory, unobtrusive, inextricably, metamorphosed



Chapter 7: The Watcher Watched

Summary

The next morning, Farley once again returns to the site of the den, but this time sees no sign of the wolves whatsoever. He watches the area through a telescope until two in the afternoon, and he is discouraged enough by then to give up his place of concealment to relieve himself. He is stunned to discover the pair of wolves sitting twenty yards directly behind him, relaxed and almost bored looking. Somewhat indignant, he shoos them away,. Startled, they trot off without looking back. Thinking on the events later that evening, Farley is confused about just who is watching whom. The next day, he returns to the area he'd thought was their den by canoe and almost walks past it when a series of squeaks commands his attention. One pup catches Farley's scent and comes out to investigate, but a howl from an adult just fifty yards behind Farley has the youngster scampering back into the hole. Farley loses his balance and barely keeps his feet as he careens down the embankment. When he is in control again, he turns to see three adults looking down at him with expressions of delight. Farley loses his temper and raises his rifle, but it is filled with sand. It won't fire. The wolves withdraw, as does Farley, no longer fit mentally to conduct any kind of science. An evening of solace with wolf juice follows as he contemplates the fact that they'd made him look like a bumbling idiot. He makes the decision to be more open minded about them from that point forward.

Analysis

Farley tries a different tactic the following day. He decides to watch from a distance. He chooses a rocky knoll from which he can surreptitiously spy on the wolves. Despite the care he takes to remain hidden, he is disappointed. Not a single wolf appears. He remains patient, but by noon he reaches the conclusion that what he had seen was not a den after all. In fact, he was coming to the realization that to find a den in this wilderness would be like discovering a diamond mine. By two in the afternoon, he finally gives up, and stands up in full view to relieve himself. He glances around to assure himself he is alone, and is shocked to see the two wolves sitting just twenty yards behind him. Relaxed, they had apparently been watching him for some time. His initial reaction isn't fear. It is one of indignation and outrage. He buttons up and turns, shouting at them to scram. Startled, they trot off without looking back once as Farley hurries to pack his gear and return to the cabin, taking his damaged pride with him.

The next day, to assert his ascendancy, he canoes to the bay and carefully climbs the sandy hillside to the area where the female had vanished. He finds scant and well-traveled trails. He would have missed the den itself if not for the squeaks that came from below. Four little bodies wrestled together until one senses him and comes out to investigate. An adult howls a warning, and it darts back inside as Farley slides and stumbles uncontrolled down the bank. Three wolves sit amused at the top when he



regains himself, and Farley loses his composure. His dignity shattered, and his gun filled with sand, he is reduced to hurling insults until finally withdrawing to the cabin once more, soothing his vanity in a jar of wolf juice. The next morning, he has decided to approach the situation with an open mind.

Discussion Question 1

What does Farley discover after spending the day watching for the wolves to no avail?

Discussion Question 2

How does Farley respond to his company? Why?

Discussion Question 3

What is it that delights the wolves so much? How does Farley respond?

Vocabulary

consummate, hypothesis, surreptitious, virulence, vexation, incredulous, exasperation, imprecations



Chapter 8: Staking The Land

Summary

Over the next few weeks, Farley goes to the wolves and sets up a den of his own, abandoning Mike's cabin. He sets up his tent, and taking no weapons, he leaves the tent only when necessary for the first few days, giving the wolves a chance to get used to his presence. For the most part, the wolves ignore him. Without realizing it, Farley sets up his tent right next to a wolf thoroughfare, and they walk within feet of him again and again. He watches as night after night they mark their territory, and one day he decides to do the same. He stakes out an area of about three acres including a segment of their path. The leader of the group stops at the first of Farley's marked bushes with a look of confusion. He sniffs, and after a minute, backs away and sits down. They stare each other down for some time before he carefully marks the area beside each of Farley's scents and then trots home.

Analysis

He begins by approaching the wolves on their terms, setting up a den of his own near theirs. He stays inside his tent to let the wolves get used to it, and they ignore him completely which Farley finds disconcerting. The idea that they could ignore him so completely is nerve wracking. He watches as they establish their boundaries in true wolf fashion. He decides to use the same tactic to force them to acknowledge his presence. One evening, he stakes out his own claim and the leading male stops, confused, when he reaches the barrier on his return. The wolf sits at the boundary and stares at Farley until he becomes quite uncomfortable. Farley wonders if he's crossed a line. Finally, the wolf gets up and carefully marks each of Farley's claims with his own before trotting back to the den.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Farley move out of Mike's cabin? Where does he inadvertently set up his tent?

Discussion Question 2

How big is the territory over which the wolves stake claim? How do they stake their claim?



Discussion Question 3

How do the wolves respond to Farley's claim of land? What does Farley learn by watching them?

Vocabulary

sojourn, insatiable, preternaturally, inconspicuous, transgressed, cognizant



Chapter 9: Good Old Uncle Albert

Summary

From that time forward, Farley's domain is never violated by the wolves, and he adapts himself to their schedules so that he doesn't miss anything vital in their day to day activities. At first, he finds it difficult to nap like a wolf, instead dropping off to sleep for hours at a time. But, once he begins to imitate all of their mannerisms, including changing his body's position after each nap, it becomes easier and he is much more refreshed. Farley names the patriarch of the wolf family George and the matriarch, Angeline. In the early days, Farley often notices the presence of a third wolf, which confounds his observations of the monogamous relationship that George and Angeline obviously have, and he has difficulty understanding how this third wolf fits in, but his behavior is like that of a favorite uncle who comes in to babysit when Angeline needs a break from her exuberant and boisterous pups, so Farley comes to think of him as Uncle Albert.

Analysis

Once Farley's perimeter is established, he is never bothered by the wolves, and his fear disappears. He learns their schedules, and he discovers, to his dismay, that there is almost always something to watch, making him reluctant to sleep at all for fear of missing something important. He finally realizes that the only solution is to further adapt himself to their schedule of wolf naps much like the males' behavior. Of course, his return to normal life is complicated by this new habit when the woman he is seeing assures him she would rather sleep with a 'grasshopper with rickets' than spend another night with him.

Farley has great difficulty remaining impersonal with them as time passes. He admires their devotion to each other, realizing that once mated, they are monogamous and their relationship is one to be emulated and appreciated. Mike later informs him that they have been partners for at least five years, and Farley learns that the Eskimos have been aware of this den site for forty or fifty years, having seen generations raised there.

Discussion Question 1

What does Farley learn early on in his observations of the wolves and their daily habits? How do the males and females differ and why?

Discussion Question 2

What is the cache and what is unusual about it? What does this lead Farley to conclude?



Discussion Question 3

How many wolves are in Farley's grouping? What are their relationships to each other?

Vocabulary

ratified, inviolate, surreptitiously, enamored, reminiscences, ebullient, promiscuity



Chapter 10: Of Mice And Wolves

Summary

One thing that confounds Farley is how the wolves manage to maintain a food supply. With growing concern for their well-being, he even returns to the cabin and bakes five loaves of bread, leaving one beside the hunting path, but his gift is ignored. At about the same time, Farley begins to experience problems with a growing mouse population. They invade the cabin, and Farley's supplies, even having their children in the pillow of his sleeping bag. Finally, Farley makes the connection one day as he watches while Angeline leaves Uncle Albert to deal with the pups. She begins to perform a sort of ballet during which she catches and eats no fewer than twenty three mice. It becomes increasingly evident to Farley that mice are their main diet source. In an effort to better understand the relationship between mice and wolves, Farley sets dozens of traps for mice to study gender, age, etc., but his efforts are thwarted when George inadvertently happens upon one of his trap lines and winds up with at least half a dozen traps hanging from various places. He feels terrible when he sees George lose his composure for the first time, yipping and streaking for home, shedding traps in his wake. Fortunately, although George seems aware that Farley is responsible for the traps, it does nothing to sour their relationship.

Analysis

After weeks of watching, Farley has yet to find any incontrovertible proof that the wolves are responsible for the decline of the caribou population, despite his employers' assertions to the contrary. In fact, he is baffled by how they manage to feed themselves. It is a long time before Farley makes the connection between his growing mouse problems and the wolves' apparent ability to feed themselves out of little more than thin air. It takes even longer, and some education from a family member of Mike's named Ootek, for Farley to understand how the wolves return to the den and then regurgitate the partially digested mouse meat for the pup's consumption. This information is in direct contradiction to what the government is expecting him to confirm about the wolves being directly responsible for the declining population of the caribou.

Discussion Question 1

What continues to confound Farley at this stage in his observations? Why?

Discussion Question 2

What hunting techniques are displayed by the wolves? Why is Farley surprised by the methods?



Discussion Question 3

What is the wolves primary food source and how is this transported to the young in the den? What does Farley decide to do, and in what way does this impact George that would cause Farley to be regretful?

Vocabulary

depredations, incontrovertible, indoctrination, peregrinations, ephemeral, regurgitating



Chapter 11: Souris a la Crème

Summary

Farley realizes that the mouse population is sufficient to feed the wolves, but he is at a loss as to how to prove it is all they eat and wishes Mike and his huskies were still there to enable him to conduct a controlled experiment. Finally, he decides to use himself as a test subject, setting up timed intervals during which in one he would eat regularly, and in the other, eat only mice. Then he could compare the results. He decides to begin immediately, and he cleans a basin of corpses. He puts them in a pot of boiling water. When they are cooked, he discovers the bones can be easily chewed and swallowed, eliminating the need to pick the numerous minute bones apart. They are bland however, and since he becomes bored with the diet quickly, he creates several recipes. After a week on this diet, the only ill affect he suffers is a craving for fats. Then he realizes that the wolves eat the entire mouse, including the fat stored in their abdomens. He corrects this by emulating them, and from that time forward only skins the mice, leaving them whole. His cravings are diminished.

Towards the end of his experiment, Mike returns bringing his cousin Ootek with him. When they learn of Farley's experiment, Ootek is concerned that if Farley eats mice, his parts will become small like mice. So, he offers Farley a clutch of small eggs. Not wanting to offend him, Farley cooks the somewhat advanced eggs and eats them. Ootek is obviously relieved and seems to understand Farley's interest in the wolves. Ootek even decides to stay with Farley in the observation tent, explaining that the wolf spirit or Amarok is his personal totem. He considers them to be his relatives. His father, also a shaman, had taken him as a child to a den and left him for a full day and night during which he played with the pups and was unharmed by the adults.

Analysis

Realizing that the wolves eat a diet consisting of mostly mice, Farley knows that he will be subject to ridicule if he shares his findings without some substantiation. Since he is the only test subject in the area, he uses himself as a guinea pig and recreates the diet for himself. He finds the mouse diet bland, and he creates recipes that help. His study is imperative in proving his contentions. Toward the end of Farley's mouse diet experiment, Mike returns with his shaman cousin Ootek, who a lot of information concerning wolves to Farley. Though at first reserved, Ootek becomes a constant companion, even staying in the study tent with Farley for periods of time.

Discussion Question 1

What two things has Farley discerned about the wolves' diet? What continues to make him question these conclusions? What does he do about it?



Discussion Question 2

What craving does Farley's newfound diet? What does the craving make him realize?

Discussion Question 3

To whom does Mike introduce Farley? Why does the man become so important? What gift does he give Farley and what is his explanation for it?

Vocabulary

imperative, exploiting, mesenteries, subcutaneously, inscrutable, misconceptions



Chapter 12: Spirit Of The Wolf

Summary

Ootek's acceptance of Farley helps Mike to overcome his fears, and he begins acting as interpreter. Through them, Farley learns a great deal, including that wolves prefer ground squirrels to caribou, expending less energy to catch them. He also explains how the wolves add fish to their diet by scaring them into narrow channels, catching them as they try to get away. Ootek describes having seen one wolf catch seven pike in less than an hour. They also catch suckers, sculpins, and salmon. When Ootek assures Farley that wolves seldom hunt caribou, Farley questions the skeletal remains surrounding the cabin, and Mike explains that he killed them to feed his dogs who become weak on a diet of fish alone. Asked how many he kills each year, Mike proudly admits that he kills up to three hundred yearly. Extrapolating this information, combined with Mike's assurance that every trapper – up to eighteen hundred of them in this region – does the same thing, Farley realizes that they alone kill up to 112,000 animals a year. Of course, this is unconfirmed. It is not a scientific fact that can be shared with Ottawa.

Analysis

The fact that Ootek so completely accepts Farley helps Farley's relationship with Mike immensely. Mike acts as an interpreter, and Farley discovers that he and Ootek share a scientific interest in the study of wolves. Ootek helps him by revealing other dietary sources the wolves have and how they hunt and fish. Farley is able to recreate in a scientific manner much of what Ootek shares with him, including the method of fishing wolves use. Ootek's information includes much that is of value and interest, including a legend in which both survival of the fittest and the relationship of natural selection are illustrated. One of the most important items of information comes from Mike himself, who admits that he is the one responsible for the plethora of caribou bones in the region of his cabin. He explains that he, and all trappers, hunt the caribou to feed their dogs. Mike proudly admits to killing between two and three hundred caribou each year, and assures Farley that all trappers do. By this admission, Farley calculates that they are likely the cause of the decrease in the caribou population that Ottawa attributes to the wolf population. Without proof, Farley knows that he will soon find himself conducting a ten year study on tortoise ticks. He resolves to gather his information the hard way.

Discussion Question 1

What assumptions does Farley make that Ootek assures him are wrong? How does Ootek substantiate his claims?



Discussion Question 2

What creation story does Ootek share with Farley? How does this alter Farley's perceptions of the wolf/caribou relationship?

Discussion Question 3

How is the predation of caribou finally explained to Farley's satisfaction? How does reality differ from the government's version of what is happening to the caribou population? What are the numbers involved?

Vocabulary

ameliorating, taciturn, paraphrased, postulated, succulent, revelations



Chapter 13: Wolf Talk

Summary

Farley gets a real education in lupine linguistics from Ootek, who one day suddenly tells him that the wolves have indicated that caribou are coming. A wolf to the north had passed on this report of approaching caribou from another more distant wolf.

Incredulous, Farley is amused by the tale, but Mike begins packing for a hunting trip immediately. Three days later he returns with venison and tells Farley that the caribou were exactly where the wolves said they'd be. Mike explains that Ootek is able to not only hear but communicate with the wolves. The next morning the males are gone, and Angeline seems nervous. She returns to the ridge over and over. Ootek listens closely, but he is unable to convey what he understood. Later, while he is sleeping, George and Uncle Albert return. When he wakes, Mike translates as Ootek claims George had sent Angeline a message that hunting was terrible, and they could be gone until midday. They had arrived at 12:17pm.

Two days later, George is told that Innuits are coming, and he heads to the cabin. This day, when George and Uncle Albert leave to go hunting, they head in a different direction – away from the cabin. A short time later, Ootek returns with three other Eskimos.

Analysis

Farley continues to be surprised by the knowledge and ability Ootek has to communicate with and understand the wolves. He watches as Ootek listens intently while the wolves talk to each other and receive information from other wolves, often, he says, related from still more wolves who are more distant yet. Incredulous, Farley is hard pressed to believe Ootek, despite Mike's immediate response to information Ootek gleans from the wolves' conversation. Despite Farley's disbelief, Ootek does appear to be consistently correct in his translations. Farley is still in need of further confirmation each time, and he is still, for some reason, surprised when he gets it. The only barrier in communication seems to be between Farley and Ootek. Ootek tries to explain what he is hearing to Farley, but Farley still requires translation from Mike to fully understand what Ootek is trying to say.

Discussion Question 1

What claim does Ootek make that Farley has trouble believing? How is Ootek's claim validated?



Discussion Question 2

What ritual at first disturbs Farley?

Discussion Question 3

What does Ootek relay to Farley that he is unable to understand, yet it is validated later?

Vocabulary

innumerable, linguistics, conversion, dereliction, conviviality, transcended



Chapter 14: Puppy Time

Summary

Towards the end of June, Angeline begins to show signs of wanting to join the males on the hunt. George is clearly all for it, but she never wanders too far away from the den. Finally, Uncle Albert takes a hint and stays with the pups while George and his mate hunt together. The next day George returns alone. George and Uncle Albert take up vigil, watching as she suddenly appears. One at a time, she moves the pups to their summer location. At first, Farley fears that he has done something to upset the wolves enough that they feel the need to put distance between them, but Ootek, translated by Mike, later assures him that this is normal. Now that the pups are weaned, and the den is too small for them, they are graduating to their next step in life. The location is chosen so that until they are a bit older, they are unable to leave without aid and have nothing to fear from outside predation.

Analysis

Farley continues to learn from Ootek regarding familial relations and how wolves view the world and each other. When Angeline inexplicably moves her pups, Farley mistakenly thinks it has something to do with their continued presence, but Ootek corrects him. She is simply moving them to an area where she can further educate them without fear of danger or them leaving the area now that they are more mobile. The new den is in a ravine, deep enough to be too difficult for the pups to leave.

The nature of the wolves is a continual surprise for Farley, as is Ootek's storehouse of information where they are concerned. For instance, there is no such thing as an orphaned wolf as we would understand it. If calamity befell a female with pups, the wolves in the area would simply move the now motherless pups to another den where a mother had pups of similar age. She, along with her family and the widowed male, would look after the pups until they were weaned. Ootek even relates an event where he witnesses this first hand.

Discussion Question 1

What happens toward the end of June that concerns Farley at first? What are the three main reasons for this?

Discussion Question 2

What are the other items of information that Ootek shares with Farley at this time?



Discussion Question 3

What urban myth does Farley question Ootek about? How does he shake Farley with his response?

Vocabulary

paramount, surpassed, perturbed, truncated, carnivores, credence, condescending



Chapter 15: Uncle Albert Falls In Love

Summary

With the caribou returning to the region, the adult wolves are often gone all night, and they do little more than sleep when they return during the day. Farley's new vantage point from on top of the ravine offers him less of a view than their former den setup had. It isn't long before the days begin to drag. Uncle Albert changes all of that when he falls in love. The idea first comes to Farley when he learns that one of Mike's huskies is in heat, and when he proposes his plan to Mike, he is eager to agree, having long wondered himself what a blend of husky/wolf would be like as a sled dog. Farley first takes Kooa on a lead around the area of the ravine where she leaves her heavy musk scent everywhere. It is a bit more difficult to drag her home, and she howls in frustration. The next morning, wolf tracks are clearly visible. Ootek and Farley secure Kooa to a heavy wire near the observation tent. That evening when the wolves begin to sing, she joins in. The wolves understand her completely. Uncle Albert is unrestrained, and after some puppy like behavior, he struts with confidence. Kooa accepts him happily, and the only problem occurs when they try to take her back to the cabin. With the help of a rifle shot nearby to discourage Uncle Albert, Ootek and Farley manage to return her to the camp, but she is not happy with the idea and howls with Albert all night long. By morning, Mike is ready to really shoot something when Ootek suggests they simply free her. He insists that she will return when her heat passes, and Mike agrees. Albert and Kooa are inseparable for the duration, but as Ootek predicted, when her heat ends, she returns happily sated. Things return to normal.

Analysis

The summer den offers Farley little opportunity to see the pups. After hunting all night, the adults return exhausted in the morning and do little more than sleep. Farley is bored, and his collection of information slows to a trickle. When he returns to the cabin to put some notes together, Mike is complaining about Kooa, one of his huskies, who is in heat. She is driving the rest of the team crazy. This gives Farley an idea as to how he can expand his scientific observation of the mating habits of wolves – something he had yet to be exposed to. To his surprise and delight, Mike readily agrees, and the experiment proceeds at a rapid pace.

First, Farley takes Kooa for a stroll around the ravine to leave her scent behind. She eagerly does so as soon as she crosses the first wolf trail, and she is less than eager to return home. That night she wails in frustration, and wolf tracks are clearly visible the next morning. It is a simple task to move her to a secure chain near the observation tent where she eagerly joins the harmonies that night. It isn't long before Albert shows himself. He cavorts around her for a bit, making a complete fool of himself, before rising up in splendor and coupling with Kooa fervently. It is less simple to separate them afterward, but they manage to get Kooa home to the cabin. She is less than thrilled, and



together she and Albert keep Mike, Farley, and Ootek up all night. Finally, Ootek suggests they simply free her, insisting she'd return. He is right, of course. They see her off, and she remains with Albert until her heat passes, and then she simply returns to the cabin, happy to be there. Albert returns to his kind. The experiment is a complete success.

Discussion Question 1

What happens when Mike returns with his Huskies that causes him problems? What is Farley's proposed solution?

Discussion Question 2

How does Albert respond to Farley's idea? What behavior does he exhibit?

Discussion Question 3

What difficulty arises as a result? how does Ootek resolve the issue to the satisfaction of all involved?

Vocabulary

miscegenation, invariably, impetuosity, consummated, infatuation, abasement, salacious, assuaged



Chapter 16: Morning Meat Delivery

Summary

Since the pups had moved to their summer den, Farley's view of them had severely diminished. One morning, Farley hides himself behind a rock outcropping so he can see more. He watches the pups playing for a while, and after a time, Angeline returns. The pups exhibit intense excitement at the sight of her, and when she gets to them she regurgitates about ten pounds of partially digested meat which the pups tie into with abandon. She lies to one side and watches them gorge themselves. Then sated, they settle down with her to sleep. Farley's stomach begins to rumble, echoing into the ravine and getting Angeline's attention. She looks around, confused, and then tracks the sound to him. She appears on the top of the ravine, just ten feet from Farley, and after staring at him for a few moments, she wrinkles her lips at him and leaves.

Analysis

Farley tries to get a closer look at the pups and wolf life by creeping down and hiding in an outcropping one morning before the adults returned from their nightly haunt. He watches as Angeline returns alone to regurgitate meat for her pups to inhale, and as they settle down to sleep, his stomach begins to growl and rumble so loud that it echoes through the small valley, bringing Angeline to alert status. She quickly tracks the source of the noise, much to Farley's embarrassment, and stands above him giving him a look of contempt before moving her pups deeper into the ravine. He can't help but feel foolish, both for his stomach's behavior and her reaction to him and it.

Discussion Question 1

How much meat is Angeline able to bring back for her pups? What is the delivery system?

Discussion Question 2

What gives Farley's location away to Angeline?

Discussion Question 3

How does Angeline respond to the intrusion?

Vocabulary

internecine, perfunctory, somnolence, cacophony, voracity, protracted, predicament



Chapter 17: Visitors From Hidden Valley

Summary

During the month of July, feeding the pups becomes a full time job. Although Farley doesn't learn much new about the wolves, he is still occasionally surprised by them. One such incident occurs when they manage to catch a caribou near the ravine, and as such can afford to take a rare day off hunting. All three adults spend the day lazing about, mostly sleeping. At one point, Albert gets up and meanders down to the river where he half-heartedly fishes for sculpin before returning to an area in the sand and laying down to sleep again. A short time later, George gets up and wanders seemingly aimless in his general direction, relieving himself here and there until he gets closer, and then his demeanor changes as he stalks Albert quietly. He gets close, and then a pounce on him with a roar and Albert, woken from his sleep responds in kind, leaping up to chase him. Angeline soon joins in and they caper together, chasing each other around and bowling each other over. Afterward, tails wagging furiously, and nuzzling each other, the game is over, and they are all exhausted again. Another incident occurs when Angeline stays behind from a hunt – something she still did occasionally, and she is visited by two strange wolves. Once she becomes aware of them, her greeting is friendly. She barks, meeting them a short distance from the den and then takes them back with her, romping in a friendly manner with both. They play, although much more gently with each other, and within an hour they are on their way again, heading back the way they'd come. Ootek isn't surprised, pointing out that it was just a visit and that one of them he thinks is Angeline's sister. In the fall, they generally join up to go south together.

Analysis

Though hunting to keep the pups fed becomes a full time job, the wolves still occasionally find time to play among themselves. Farley manages to witness one episode where George stalks Albert as he sleeps peacefully and pounces on him. Angeline joins in the fun as they tumble, chase, and rough house with each other like children themselves. Afterward, there is much tail wagging and bumping up against each other with obvious affection. Another incident surprises Farley when he witnesses a visit from a neighboring wolf pair who stop a respectful distance and announce their presence. Angeline goes up to greet them, and after a friendly meeting, takes them down into the ravine. They romp and play together, albeit much more gently than she would with George or Albert, and then the two strange wolves leave, returning the same way they'd come. While Farley is surprised by the visit, Ootek can't understand why. Humans visit all the time, he explains. Why wouldn't wolves? He tells Farley that he is pretty sure that one is Angeline's sister. When Farley questions him further, Ootek bluntly asks him how much longer he plans to hang around, making it plain that he thinks Farley has been there long enough already.



Discussion Question 1

How does George amuse himself when hunting is temporarily unnecessary?

Discussion Question 2

What other event takes place in July to break up the boredom for Farley and the wolves?

Discussion Question 3

Why is Ootek surprised by Farley's response and how does Ootek respond to Farley?

Vocabulary

lassitude, desultory, insouciance, denouement, interstice, proximity, sacrosanct



Chapter 18: Family Life

Summary

Midway through July, Farley realizes that he hasn't actually followed the operational orders as Ottawa had set out. Since his first task should have been to conduct a survey of the wolves as well as a census, he and Ootek strike out in the canoe fully packed with camping gear. In the weeks that follow, he and Ootek cover hundreds of miles, gathering information. The authorities had made a determination that the wolf population of Keewatin could be estimated at about thirty thousand - an average of about one wolf for every six square miles. Taking the environment (water logged areas or barren, rocky regions) in account, the density of wolves should have been about one wolf for every two square miles. The reality is much different however, and Farley revises the estimate to a more realistic population of three thousand wolves, and even that is likely a serious exaggeration. Ootek tells Farley that the wolf populations are tied to not only the habitat/homestead availability, but also the prey populations. When food is scarce, litters are small, and if the wolves outgrow their habitat, illness reduces their levels to a survivable level once again.

Analysis

By mid-July, Farley had been living in the barrens for long enough to have put Ottawa and their Operation Order entirely from his mind. Feeling guilty about his dereliction of duty, he decides to get back on track. He and Ootek loaded a canoe and headed northward through the tundra to study the wolf-caribou-predator-prey relationships. One of the first things that he discovers is that the estimated population of wolves is grossly exaggerated. In fact, instead of the thirty thousand that Ottawa estimates the population to be, Farley estimates a more likely figure is about three thousand and even that is probably exaggerated to a degree. Ootek explains the familial relationships that wolves have, and Farley begins to understand that wolves practice a variety of forced birth control where a male may remain celibate for years. Old wolves tend to remain celibate after losing their mates as well. All of these factors and more play a part in the population control of the species.

Discussion Question 1

In what way is Farley forced to revise his employers' estimates of the wolf populations and why?

Discussion Question 2

What practice do wolves adopt that amounts to deprivation of a sort, and why? What other factors play a part in this and how?



Discussion Question 3

What happened during the 1946 rabies epidemic and how were the facts lost in the translation of events?

Vocabulary

dereliction, dispersal, supernumerary, epidemic, invariably, contingents, intrepid



Chapter 19: Naked To The Wolves

Summary

In all their travels, Farley and Ootek only encounter human beings once. One of the families of Ootek's tribe had pitched a tent in a position to intercept the caribou as they crossed the river at a point where it narrows. Ootek stays to help them for a few days, while Farley takes advantage of some time alone to swim, sunbathe, and relax. Since modesty is unnecessary, Farley is caught without clothing when three wolves cross a nearby ridge. Rather than risk losing them by stopping to get his clothing, Farley grabs his binoculars and heads after them as is. He follows them six miles or more across the country and is surprised to find that despite running into a large caribou herd, the wolves seemed intent on playing rather than hunting. In fact, the scene that greets him as he crests the hill is one of placid cohabitation between the species. He finally gives up when he realizes that he is doing more to frighten the herd than the wolves are, and he heads for camp again. Several miles from it, he sees an Eskimo woman and three children waving spears and skinning knives. Acutely aware of his nakedness, Farley sprints once more, trying to get past them and back to camp. He arrives and dresses just as both the group of men and the woman and her children arrive. Later, Ootek explains that one of the children had seen him running naked across the hills following the wolves and had gone home to tell his mother. She had immediately decided that Farley had lost his mind and was trying to take on the wolves bare handed and bare naked. Assembling her children and weapons, they had given chase to help. Ootek is more than a little amused by it all and can't help the occasional comment.

Analysis

Farley finds their travel invigorating. The only other souls Ootek and Farley encounter in their travels are a family from his small tribe, and Ootek joins their hunt hoping to help them to find enough meat to get them through the winter. While he is gone, Farley strips, swims, and enjoys his time off. He is sunbathing, all modesty shed in the wilderness, when three wolves cross the crest of a near ridge. Worried he might lose them if he takes the time to dress, he follows them with nothing more than binoculars, but instead of hunting, this trio of wolves is more interested in playing. Even the caribou seem to realize that they intend no threat, and don't even rise as they cross the same expanses. Sweaty and tired, Farley has run almost six miles before he finally accepts that there will not be a hunt to witness, and heads for camp again. Unbeknownst to him, a young Eskimo child picking berries had witnessed his naked pursuit of the wolves, and after telling his mother, she gathered her children and weapons to give chase, believing that the white man her son had seen had likely lost his mind. All this is later revealed when Ootek laughingly explains that she had thought Farley was hunting wolves with his bare hands and would get himself killed. Farley is suitably embarrassed as Ootek teases him.



Discussion Question 1

What happens when Farley comes across an Eskimo woman and her three children after pursuing a group of wolves?

Discussion Question 2

What did the Eskimo woman think Farley was doing and why?

Discussion Question 3

What is it about Farley's condition and behavior that leads her to believe this?

Vocabulary

invigorating, immensity, quandary, disconcerted, imminent, discretion



Chapter 20: The Worm I' The Bud

Summary

Farley asks Ootek about the wolves' behavior, and he explains that a caribou is aware that it can outrun a wolf and therefore has little to fear. The wolves, also aware of this fact, seldom even try and, instead, occasionally rush a herd to see if they can expose a weak or wounded member. It is because of the wolf that the caribou is strong, he reminds Farley. With this in mind, Farley watches again, and he sees that the pattern repeats itself again and again. Then he notices a pattern. The wolves never test a herd of bucks in their prime at the peak of their conditioning, preferring instead to approach the herds with mixed does and fawns where natural selection hasn't had a chance to play out as yet. The wolves seem to employ an economy of effort, never recklessly expending energy. The wolves never attempt to hamstring a caribou either – another surprise to Farley. Instead, they leap for the back of the neck to bring it down. The kills are generally quick and clean. There is also no evidence whatsoever that a wolf will kill for fun or sport, nor do they ever kill more than they can use even if the opportunity presents itself. Farley examines sixty seven caribou killed by wolves, and in each case there is little that remains beyond ligaments, hair, offal and bones. What did remain often showed signs of disease or debility, confirming that the animal was old, enfeebled, or in a case where a fresh kill was examined, infested with parasites. Farley takes samples and seeing Ootek's interest, he begins to explain how the parasites differ and how they can even affect the species that consumes an infected animal. Too late, he realizes the extent of the discomfort he is causing the Eskimo as this has been his primary diet since childhood, and he tries to tell him it is all a joke. He suggests that Ootek should go back to camp for a big steak, but he adds that he should ensure he cook it well.

Analysis

Ootek is a fountain of information. He educates Farley as to why the wolves behaved as they did, rushing the herd of caribou but making no real attempt to catch one. Ootek explains that wolves are aware they can't catch a healthy caribou, as are the caribou, and as such what they are actually doing is searching the herd for a sick or weak animal. Farley observes this behavior over and over again, but knows that without scientific proof Ottawa will not be convinced simply based on his say so. He collects samples and examines the carcasses of dozens of caribou. Most have been consumed, but occasionally Ootek helps him to examine a freshly killed animal by chasing the wolves away. Later, as Farley examines the samples he's taken, he notices the interest Ootek displays in what he is doing. Farley begins to explain what he is doing and the effects that these parasites, worms and infestations have on both the caribou and anything that is unlucky enough to have consumed it. As he is describing how large worms can grow, and how bad an infestation can get, he is unaware of the effects his explanations are having on the Eskimo. Finally, Ootek insists that Farley stop, adding



that if all he has said is true, he will have to eat only fish like an otter. Then hopefully, he adds that perhaps this is all simply a white man's joke. He is so hopeful that Farley seizes the opportunity to repair the damage he has done and laughs half-heartedly, telling Ootek that he is right and it was all just a joke he was playing on him. He sends him back to his camp, suggesting he go and cook a big steak but adds that he should be sure to cook it well.

Discussion Question 1

Why do healthy caribou have nothing to fear from wolves according to Ootek?

Discussion Question 2

What subject matter does Ootek have trouble digesting and why?

Discussion Question 3

What does Farley finally do to ease his mind and why?

Vocabulary

inexplicable, insatiable, dispersed, adversaries, irrefutable, adjuration, segmented, enlightening



Chapter 21: School Days

Summary

In the middle of September, Farley, and Ootek return to Wolf House Bay. The pups are no longer being kept in the summer den, and they have even begun going on shorter hunts with Angeline, George, and Albert. The family now roamed throughout their territory, and to maintain his observations, Farley lived that lifestyle as much as possible with them. One day, as Farley watches, the family comes into view with another dark gray wolf. Farley doesn't recognize him, but he stays with the family from then forward. While the others sleep, George roams around restlessly until he finally manages to convince Angeline to get to her feet. Together, the four adults then give the pups a lesson in hunting as Farley watches. The adults manage to carve off a group of deer and chase them toward the pups. Then, they fall back and allowing the pups to take up the chase while they watched their progress. The adults lie down again, and thirty minutes later the pups return, panting heavily and exhausted.

Analysis

The pups have begun to explore the world with the adults now, and when Ootek and Farley return to Wolf House, they discover the family is out roaming most of the time now. Farley enjoys the lifestyle imposed on him by the wolves' new habits, and as much as can be done, he goes with them. One day Farley makes his way north along the crest overlooking a large valley that the caribou use as a highway to the south. He can see a steady stream of grazing caribou, and Farley settles into a niche at the top of a cliff with his binoculars, hoping to catch sight of the wolves. They don't disappoint. Just before noon, the family shows up with the addition of a large dark gray wolf. Farley watches as George convinces them to put the pups through a training hunt. The adults work their way around the herd and drive a group toward the pups who quickly get the message and join in the fracas. As soon as the pups become involved, the adults lie down again, leaving the youngsters to chase the deer on their own. It is a full thirty minutes before the pups return, exhausted, to the adults.

Discussion Question 1

What are some of the changes occurring in the wolves' lives now?

Discussion Question 2

What lesson does Farley observe and how is it taught?



Discussion Question 3

Who starts the schooling lesson and how does it begin?

Vocabulary

transverse, lethargically, equanimity, pertinent, disconsolately, recalcitrant, constituent



Chapter 22: Scatology

Summary

As September turns to October, Farley begins to pay a bit more attention to some of the studies that Ottawa insisted on. One of these studies involved a Raunkiaer's Circle that Farley was supposed to fling with his eyes closed after turning in circles several times. This metal hoop, when it landed, was supposed to provide Farley with a truly random sampling of the vegetation over which it landed. The object was for Farley to conduct a 'cover degree' study which would not only determine what grew, but the density and ratios of plants to each other as well. Unfortunately, after flinging it, Farley found that he spent more time looking for it than studying what it covered. Farley was not only supposed to pick all of the plants in the circle and count the species, he had to also count the numbers of each species – many of the microscopic. On the third day of his back breaking work, Ootek joins him and watches as Farley flings the hoop half-heartedly. When he comments on the poor quality of the throw, Farley happily suggests he do better. The Gods are smiling when Ootek flings the hoop and it disappears into a tundra pond. Ootek is confused when Farley celebrates by splitting his last bottle of wolf juice with him. Another study Ottawa insists on is the collection of wolf scat. By the end of September, Farley had a formidable collection, and he was running out of room for it.

Unwilling to analyze these samples in front of Mike and Ootek, Farley waits until they have gone caribou hunting before he begins the unpleasant task. Now hardened, he is forced to take them down to the water and soak them to soften them first. Then, donning a gas mask to avoid the inhalation of parasites that hatch into worms in the brain and are often fatal, Farley begins to dissect and record his observations. He is so engrossed that he is stunned to find a circle of unfamiliar Eskimos standing behind him with expressions that ranged from revulsion to incredulity. It takes Farley a few moments before he manages to remove his mask and remember a few words of greeting. Finally, the Eskimos begin to relax. Since Ootek and Mike are absent, Farley acts as the host, and he offers to make them all dinner. He finishes up, cleans out the pails, and fills them with water for the tea he knows will be required. Two young Eskimos watch him with interest and then scamper up the hill to the area where the adults are setting up their tents. Farley busies himself making dinner and is stunned when the Eskimos don't show up. He goes out to look for them and finds they have left without a word. Feeling snubbed, he later asks Ootek why they would have left in such a manner. After asking a great many questions, Ootek admits that he couldn't possibly explain, and he doesn't.

Analysis

Farley is tasked with several scientific studies – one of them involving a hoop which is thrown randomly over an area so that the species and number in each species of plant life can be counted and documented. It is back breaking work. By the third day, Farley



has mostly lost his good nature. Ootek joins him then and offers to throw the hoop better than Farley has, and Farley is only too happy to let him do so. Ootek lets it fly, and it settles into a nearby tundra pond. Expecting Farley to be furious, Ootek braces himself and is stunned when Farley dances in circles with him and then shares his last bottle of wolf juice with him. It is just one more example of the inexplicable behavior of the white man in his mind.

Some of the tasks Ottawa sets out for Farley are much less pleasant than others. One of these involves the collection and analyzing of wolf scat. Farley dutifully collects it during his time following the wolves, labeling each sample carefully and storing them in bags under his bed. He is reluctant to begin the science of it in front of Mike and Ootek, knowing he would be unable to explain adequately what he is doing. He finally has the opportunity to get started on it when Mike and Ootek leave to hunt caribou. Because the samples have hardened, he is forced to soften them in pails of water at the river's edge before dissecting and recording his findings. All of this is done in a gas mask provided by Ottawa to avoid the inhalation of parasites. He is so engrossed in his task that he doesn't hear the group of Eskimo who have arrived to see the white man they've heard is staying in Mike's cabin. They are obviously disgusted by his task. Though unable to explain, he does remember words of greeting and hospitality, inviting them to join him for dinner. Though they seem to agree, by the time Farley had cleaned the pails and filled them with water for tea, then cooked the food, the Eskimos had inexplicably packed up and gone without a word. Even Ootek seems unable to explain why his hospitality was so rudely spurned.

Discussion Question 1

What has Farley deliberately neglected during his entire time in the Barren Lands? What studies has he been saddled with that have as yet to be accomplished? How are they done?

Discussion Question 2

What is the greatest difficulty involved in the vegetation study? How does Ootek manage to solve it for Farley?

Discussion Question 3

What is Farley doing when a group of Eskimos arrive unannounced? Why does the group most likely abandon Farley before he can finish cooking the meal he makes for them without so much as a word?

Vocabulary

innumerable, compliance, disparagingly, inscrutable, fortuitously, enraptured, formidable

Chapter 23: To Kill A Wolf

Summary

Governments, both provincial and federal, turn a blind eye to the senseless slaughter of wolves, regardless of the evidence put before them. Instead, they fueled the fire by offering a twenty dollar bounty on any wolf killed and many trappers find that they not only supplement their income, but use wolf kill as an income mainstay. Unfortunately, overall opinion of wolves is so low that none of the governments involved care how the wolves are killed. Rather than simply catching wolves in traps or even shooting them, many trappers use strychnine liberally and kill everything in a given area. The result is the widespread killing of every fox, wolverine, and other flesh eater in a given region. One trapper boasted that he'd killed over a hundred of the wolves in a single season. The killing didn't stop there. Planes were used to corral wolves out on the ice or run them down until they were too exhausted to do more than just stand there as they were filled with buckshot. Some even did the same to the caribou, shooting dozens after herding them into the center of a frozen lake and then circling by plane and exterminating them like fish in a barrel. They would be the lure used to bring the wolves out into the open. It is a barbaric practice, supported and even quietly encouraged by governments whose misconceptions regarding wolves are monumental. At one point, in an effort to convince Farley that the wolves are to blame, a trader tracks Farley down and excitedly suggests he go to Fishduck Lake immediately for proof that wolves kill indiscriminately and for sport rather than need of food. Farley goes immediately as asked, and does indeed find a horrific scene on the lake. Twenty three caribou are dead, turning the snow crimson beneath them, but there are no wolf prints anywhere to be seen. The only damage to the animals includes the trails left by the skis of a plane and two of three bucks missing heads. One pregnant doe is also missing her hindquarters. It isn't difficult to recreate the 'safari' that had occurred. Farley radios a comprehensive report of the situation to the government, naively believing it would have impact. The only thing that changed was the Provincial Government raising the bounty on wolves to twenty dollars weeks later.

Analysis

From the months of November to April, the wolves would leave as would the caribou. The wolves followed them in a cycle of dependency, knowing that in case of a famine, only the deer would keep them alive. At this time, they would often gather together in groups of five to ten, hunting together for survival. This is a time of great risk for the wolves however. Not only do they face winter's hardships, but they are set upon by man in ways that are inhumane and incomprehensible. The governments, both provincial and federal, support the senseless slaughter of wolves by imposing a bounty on them ranging from ten to as much as thirty dollars and when the price that a fox pelt can fetch is minimal, they are a gold mine to a trapper. While some trappers merely content themselves with shooting the wolves, many take it a step farther. They set out poison



that indiscriminately kills everything in its path, or they drive the wolves out onto a frozen lake where they can chase it by plane until it drops of exhaustion and shoot them at that point. The practice is quietly supported if not even endorsed by the government who even allow 'safaris' where hunters are allowed to herd caribou in the same way and kill them on frozen lakes to lure wolves out into the open for the next killing spree. It is barbaric,. When Farley witnesses it first hand, he naively sends a detailed report to the government thinking something might change. It does. The bounty on wolves increases.

Discussion Question 1

What occurs from early November through until April? Why? How do the Chippewayan Indians explain the dispersal of wolves during this period? Why is this so important?

Discussion Question 2

What truths about trappers and wolves are steadfastly suppressed and why? What practices are not only allowed, but encouraged, despite the lack of scientific evidence to defend the actions?

Discussion Question 3

What is a safari? What proof does Farley offer the government regarding one such safaris? How does the government respond?

Vocabulary

nomadic, disseminated, indiscriminately, vilification, remonstrance, serpentine, indignation



Chapter 24: The World We Lost

Summary

Farley had long given up on the pilot who had dropped him at Wolf House Bay, and he is surprised when Ootek runs to tell him that a plane is circling to the west. He sets out quickly with smoke bombs, and the Norseman lands in the bay. The pilot informs him of all that has gone on in his absence from the Department's disturbed idea that he had absconded with their equipment to the fact that even the Royal Canadian Mounted Police had been asked to help find him. They, however, couldn't even find the pilot who had dropped him off. They heard a rumor that he was a Secret Service spy sent to report on the Russian bases at the pole and sent a scathing letter to the Department suggesting honesty might be in order next time. The pilot hadn't been sent to find him, but on a prospecting survey. He had agreed to relay a message to the Department to send a plane to pick up its equipment before freeze up. Farley takes advantage of the empty wolf den to take measurements. The Norseman startles him when it takes off, and Farley takes a moment to calm himself before crawling into the small den. It goes in for quite a distance, and then after about eight feet it goes up and left. Farley points his nearly dead flashlight in that direction and is stunned to see four green lights reflected back at him. He is frozen for a moment as his brain digests that he is in a very compromising position, deep inside a den with wolves. The wolves don't make a sound, not even growling at him. After a minute, he shoves the flashlight forward further and recognizes Angeline and one of her pups. As fast as he can, Farley backs out of the den, shaking in fear. He lit a cigarette, and thought about his first reaction which would have been to shoot had he been holding a gun. He thinks about Angeline and her pup, having hidden in the den in fear of the aircraft. To the east, a wolf howls questioningly, and Farley recognizes George's voice, seeking the missing members of his family. He hears it as the voice of a world lost, once theirs, and then glimpsed briefly by Farley only to be once again excluded by his own prejudice and fear again.

Analysis

Farley is surprised when the Norseman arrives, but not as surprised as the pilot who hadn't come for Farley at all but was merely on a prospecting survey. He tells Farley about the search that had been conducted for him, and Farley convinces him to relay a message to the Department to send a plane for him. Knowing he has little time left, he goes to investigate the now empty wolf den. There, after crawling in as far as he can, he is stunned to discover he is not alone. Two sets of eyes look back at him soundlessly. Realizing he is in a precarious position, he manages to hold the flashlight out far enough ahead of himself to recognize Angeline and one of her pups. They remain soundless as he crawls back out, shaking at first with fear, and then with indignation that they should scare him to such a degree. With increasing horror, he realizes that had he been armed, he likely would have shot them then, despite their lack of aggression and all that he had learned. It was an insight into his own character that dismays and



disturbs him. Despite how close he had been to the wolves for the entire time and how there had been no threat from them whatsoever, he still reverted to a fearful and aggressive state at close contact. Farley knows that the cause is lost at that moment, if only because even he couldn't overcome his base fear and automatic reactions at that moment. How could he possibly change the minds of others when his was still so locked in his own preconceived notions?

Discussion Question 1

What does the Norseman pilot tell Farley about the department of the government that hired him? What steps did the government take? What did they 'discover'?

Discussion Question 2

What does Farley do before leaving, to round out his study of the lives of wolves?

Discussion Question 3

What does he discover? What ingrained prejudice still takes over despite the length of time he'd just spent living with the wolves, and how does Farley feel? What does he realize?

Vocabulary

inquisitive, sleuthing, prospecting, esker, claustrophobia, prejudices, inevitable, apparition



Characters

Farley Mowat

At age five, Farley Mowat first became interested in his future career when he came across two catfish that were gasping in a stagnant pool near his grandmother's house in Ontario. When they stubbornly refused to die, he took them home, housing them in his grandmother's toilet until they were inadvertently flushed after she came across them by chance in the middle of the night. As an adult, Farley pursues a career as a naturalist and as a biologist, recognizing his own affinity for the lesser beasts of the kingdom of animals. He has several mentors – a Scotsman who studied pocket gophers and a mammalogist who studies the uterine scars of shrews. He could never understand why all of those in the study of biology preferred to study the animal after it was already dead. To him, the study of biology necessitated that they be studied while in their natural habitat, and therefore very much alive.

To that end, when he was offered the position with the government to study wolves in their own environment, he hardly hesitated. He is briefed, orientated, and sent out to the subarctic Barren Lands to study wolves and determine their habitats and habits. This study is not one that he embarks on lightly, and despite the preparations made by the government, he is wholeheartedly unprepared for the season that would follow, beginning immediately upon his landing in Churchill. He is stuck there for a time while he waits for a plane to take him to the Barrens, and uses the opportunity to interview locals, trappers and anyone else professing knowledge of wolves and their habits, but most of the information he gleans is useless if not entirely false. Luckily, when he is left on the frozen lake with all of his gear, the first person he meets is an Inuit named Mike who trapped in the region.

Mike allows him to stay in his cabin. He later also meets Mike's cousin Ootek, who is a shaman and naturalist. Ootek is a source of knowledge where the wolves are concerned. He knows their habitats and their cycles, and he can understand their myriad of vocalizations. Farley is astounded by these facts, as he struggles to keep up. The months that follow are an eye opener for Farley as he learns that wolves have a bad reputation without cause or justification. The biggest surprise comes when Farley is almost ready to leave. Coming face to face with one of the wolves he has studied and lived near for months, he becomes fearful to a point of being irrational. It is deeply disappointing to him as he then understands that any hope he had of changing the minds of others where wolves were concerned died in that moment.

Mike

Mike is a trapper. Farley meets him soon after being dropped off by the plane in the wilderness. He is an eighteen year old man of mixed white and Eskimo parentage. He has a cabin not far from where Farley is dropped. His mother lives with a small Eskimo



band about seventy miles to the north. They are the only inhabitants of the area for about ten thousand square miles, he tells Farley. Mike has never seen an aircraft land in the region of the Barren Lands he occupies. His father taught him just enough about Christianity and devils that when he first meets Farley, he is convinced that he is some form of demon, or, perhaps, even the devil himself. He keeps his distance, despite the deal he makes with Farley to supply accommodations for three months in his cabin and to act as a guide and reference source. He is wary of Farley at first, and that attitude doesn't improve as Farley pulls out the scalpels and other tools he is equipped with to study all aspects of the wolves. At first, he leaves, somewhat terrified by Farley and his equipment, but he returns with his cousin Ootek. Mike acts as an interpreter for Ootek and Farley for the coming months.

Arctic Wolves

The largest of the many species of wolves, an Arctic wolf can weigh as much as one hundred and seventy pounds and measure up to almost nine feet from nose tip to tip of tail. They stand up to forty two inches high at the shoulders and can consume up to thirty pounds of raw meat in a single sitting. Their paw prints measure six inches in diameter and they have up to a forty inch stride. They have teeth which can both grind and rend, crushing even the strongest of bones.

George

The patriarch of the wolf family, George is a regal animal who reminds Farley increasingly of a Royal Gentleman he worked for during the war. He is a massive beast with a coat of silver-white and is about a third larger in size than his mate, Angeline. He has a dignity and presence that is without peer, although he is thoughtful and conscientious of the others in the family. He is the type of father who is often spoken of in books but seldom seen in real life – the kind of man every son wishes for as a father. He and Angeline are extremely affectionate with each other and once paired, it is clear they have mated for life.

Angeline

An almost pure white wolf, Angeline has a thick ruff surrounding her face with beautiful, slightly slanted eyes that are spaced wide. Minx like in appearance, Angeline is a combination of passionate and devilish. She is the perfect mother. Her ebullient character endears itself to Farley, and he becomes incredibly fond of her. She is as devoted to George as he is to her, and she displays an obvious delight each time he returns to her. Angeline dotes on her pups, despite her obvious desire to join the males during their frequent hunts to keep the family fed. Luckily, with the presence of the wolf Farley dubs Uncle Albert, she is able to go now and then with George, knowing that her pups are in good company and well cared for.



Uncle Albert

The third wolf that Farley sees off and on, especially in the beginning is somewhat of a character. He is not as big as George, and he has a grayish overtone to his white coat. He behaves much like a sitter to the pups when Angeline is played out. His behavior invites their most rambunctious responses. He has limitless patience and tires the pups out. Afterward, while Angeline rests, he checks on them frequently to ensure they are safe and sound. Uncle Albert spends most of his time celibate. The only exception occurs during an experiment that Farley orchestrates between Albert and one of Mike's huskies, Kooa. When she goes into heat, Farley convinces Mike to allow him to introduce the two, and it is love at first sight. For the duration of her heat, they are inseparable although both return to their own species when the heat passes.

Ootek

As a first rate naturalist and family member of Mike's, Ootek helps Farley to understand how the wolves manage to feed their young, regurgitating partially digested mice for the benefit of the pups. Ootek spends a great deal of time with Farley. Together, they set up camp near a wolf's den and spend an entire season following their every movement. When the wolves leave the shelter of the first den for a larger and safe ravine where the pups will be educated, it is Ootek who explains to Farley that it is not his presence that has scared them off or offended them. It is merely a natural progression to the summer den. Ootek also goes with Farley as much as is possible when the wolf pups are old enough to begin ranging and hunting with their parents and translates their actions, vocalizations, and demeanors for Farley. He is equally interested in the work that Farley does. He helps as much as possible, but mostly just watches with unbridled curiosity as Farley conducts experiments and studies aspects of wolf life. For the most part however, Farley is a very strange white man indeed, who despite his interest in wolves is prone to doing things that make little or no sense. He often acts in ways that can only be described as crazy.

Kaila

The God of the Sky according to an age old legend Ootek relates to Farley which is part of the folklore of the inland Eskimos in which natural selection and survival of the fittest are illustrated.

Kooa

Kooa is one of Mike's huskies who happens to go into heat while he is at the cabin. Driving him crazy with her calls of sexual frustration, Mike is ready to take drastic action when Farley suggests another alternative. Mike is quick to agree. Although she is shackled for their first meeting, it is obvious that she and Uncle Albert have common interests. She seductively sings when the other wolves do, and Uncle Albert goes

towards her at a gallop. She is unimpressed by his behavior at first, but soon warms to him and coyly turns her back. Though Mike and Farley attempt to separate the two after that, they both howl their frustrations until it is suggested by Ootek that they simply allow the two to be together for the time being, insisting she will return on her own. She does this of course, exactly as Ootek said she would.



Symbols and Symbolism

Greenhedges

The name given to Farley Mowat's grandmother's house.

Dominion Wildlife Service

The company that hired Farley Mowat at a rate of one hundred and twenty dollars a month to work in the field on their Lupine Project.

Meat Cache

A location about half a mile from the den amidst crevices of boulders where extra meat is stored for the primary use of a female who is nursing and therefore unable to join the males on hunting trips of any extended duration. It is also used by a nearby pair of foxes whose den is located nearby.

Arctic Sculpins

Small fish that lurk in shoal water under rocks.

Pike, Salmon, and Suckers

More of the Arctic fish that make up a wolf diet.

Shaman

Ootek and his father are this type of magic priest.

Souris A La Crème

One of the recipes that Farley creates to take the boredom out of the blandness of a strictly mouse diet.

Sowbelly

Available in the Arctic, it is similar to salt pork.



Ground Squirrels

Another staple in a wolf's diet.

Operation Order

Orders from Ottawa that Farley receives before leaving which plainly state that his first task is to conduct a general survey and census of wolves which is to be followed by a 'wolf-caribou-predator-prey' relationship study.

Raunkiaer's Circle

A device which is actually little more than a large metal hoop which is supposed to be thrown after turning in circles with closed eyes several times – then flung as far as possible. This is supposed to assure a completely random sampling of plants in the area.

Ptarmigan

Birds similar in size to grouse who inhabit the area of the northern wilderness.

Scatology

The study of wolf scat as Farley is instructed to do by Ottawa.

Safaris

The Provincial Government sponsored way to lure parties of 'sportsmen' to the Barren Lands to kill caribou with the hope that the carcasses will attract wolves to slaughter.

Norseman

The one who agrees to take a message to Ottawa to send a plane for Farley's return.

Amarok

Ootek's personal totem/helping spirit also known as the Wolf Being.



Settings

Oakville, Ontario

The place where Farley Mowat's grandmother lives.

Keewatin Barren Lands

The region in which Farley is dropped to study wolves. It is in the middle of three hundred miles or so northwest of Churchill.

Mike's Cabin

Built out of poles and covered with caribou hides in various states of decay, Mike's cabin is hardly extravagant, but it serves as Farley's initial base of operations.

Wolf House Bay

The name that Farley gives to the bay in which he first discovers the wolf family that he and Ootek then study for many months afterward.

Fishduck Lake

The site of the caribou slaughter that the trapper insisted Farley visit as proof of the wanton waste of wolves.



Themes and Motifs

Political Pressure Creates Clueless Politicians

When Farley Mowat is first engaged by the Dominion Wildlife Service, he is asked to report to Ottawa where he presents himself to the Chief Mammalogist. He is given an orientation to explain the task they expect him to accomplish, and is 'educated' regarding the wolf situation which he is expected to address. The issue of wolves, he is told, has become a problem of national importance, and in that single year alone almost forty separate memorandums had been received from members of the House of Commons. All of them were related to complaints from constituents who insist that something be done about the overblown wolf population and the impact it is having on the members of the fish and game clubs. Ammunition manufactures and hunters alike presented grievances regarding the inordinate number of deer and caribou that the wolves are killing. To assure their constituents that they are doing all they can to address the situation, the bureaucrats in Ottawa send Farley to assess the situation first hand. In short, the wolf is now his problem. He is sent to Churchill and from there on to the desolate regions of the subarctic Barren Lands to study the situation and report back to Ottawa. Of course, what Ottawa 'knows' and the truth are often two very different things, and this is one such case. Not only are the wolves not responsible for the declining caribou population, but they have a much more varied diet which includes fish, mice, ground squirrels and to a much lesser degree, caribou. They are not killing for blood lust alone, or hunting with abandon as those in Ottawa had suggested. In fact, the truth of the matter is that the actual culprits responsible for the declining caribou population are the trappers in the region who each kill hundreds of caribou each year in order to feed their sled dogs. This is just one of the many misconceptions that exists where wolves are concerned, spurred on by hunters and the fish and game clubs erroneously.

Wolf Population And Birth Control Factors

Farley has difficulty understanding wolf population in the region, and turns to Ootek for information. Ootek tells him that to begin with, females generally don't breed before they are two years old, and males generally wait until they are three. Until then, they generally stay with their parents, and if there is a shortage of homesteads available, they do not even breed then. With a limited amount of hunting territory available, not every bitch is able to raise a litter, especially since overpopulation would result in a decline in the number of prey animals, causing starvation. As such, some wolves stay celibate for years. Since they only have the desire to mate for three weeks each year, this isn't a terrific hardship, and the desire for familial surroundings is made up for by the communal nature of their living situations. Ootek also believes they have a built in birth control based on the availability of food species. When they are abundant, bitches can have as many as eight pups in a litter. When food is scarce, litters can go down to as little as one or two pups in each. Another factor that plays a part is illness or disease



which often presents itself in a wolf population if food grows scarce. Epidemics such as distemper, rabies, or mange would appear during these times, and their numbers are quickly reduced to a level of survival. The last such incident occurred in 1946. The lemmings were at a low point in their four year cycle, and the caribou chose the same year to bypass southern central Keewatin, inexplicably altering their migration routes entirely. The result for the wolves was disastrous. Since all of nature is tied together, foxes and Eskimos suffered as well.

Official and Sanctioned Slaughters

There is an overwhelming concern in Farley's time that wolves are causing the demise of the caribou. Stories are told of how wolves have wantonly killed entire herds without need of food. Left unchecked, they will decimate the population. After much intensive direct study, Farley is able to observe that the truth is nothing like the official version. The reality is that the wolves and the caribou populations strengthen each other and have for long before man entered the picture and would have continued to do so if man had not seen fit to intervene. Wolves only hunt and kill the weak or the injured, the sick or lame caribou. The rest are too fleet of foot to be caught. In truth, the trappers disliked the wolves because they were too smart to be caught in traps but often sprang them instead, making it impossible for the trappers to catch the foxes they were set for. The trappers also feared the wolves, and when the governments, both Provincial and Federal, sought to relieve the plight of the trappers by offering a bounty on wolves, the killing spree was on. In those days, a fox pelt was sometimes worth nothing while the bounty on wolves ranged from ten to thirty dollars each. In a time of poverty, this was a windfall, and rather than use it as supplemental income, trappers went all out in their efforts to increase the wolf numbers they turned in. Many in the far north used methods abhorrent to anyone with conscience, spreading strychnine over an area so immense that all animals within the boundary were killed. One trapper collected as many as a hundred and eighteen bounties in a single year, most of them with wolves that were born only that spring. The governments not only turned a blind eye to it all, but actually extended covert permission. The slaughters didn't stop there. When traps and poison weren't sufficient enough at killing, men would board aircraft and finding wolves in the open areas of frozen lakes, would pursue them at low altitudes until they literally ran them to death in most cases. In one occasion of record, a wolf in desperation jumped at the ski of one such low flying plane and though it died in the ensuing crash, all aboard did as well. Of course, the story told was not one in which the wolf was pitied. In fact, it only fueled the fire as wolves were then described as cunning and increasingly dangerous, while the men were described as courageous. This sickening slaughter was even extended to the caribou who would be chased out onto the middle of a lake and run in circles until they were too exhausted to do more than stand and quake in mindless fear while the plane circled and the hunters simply shot them all dead. Then they would land and take the best of the antlers with them, leaving the rest of the meat on the ice to attract the wolves for the next slaughter. On and on it went. Those that tried to talk sense to the government were branded as wolf lovers, and the wolves were held accountable. Farley is sickened. The more he learns, the more distressed he becomes.



Styles

Point of View

Never Cry Wolf by Farley Mowat is an autobiographical tale that chronicles his scientific study of arctic wolves in the Barren Lands of central Keewatin. Farley is hired by the Dominion Wildlife Service of the Canadian government. His services are engaged for the salary of one hundred and twenty dollars per month and he is ordered to report to Ottawa at once. When he gets there, he is put through an orientation process, introduced to the Deputy Minister, and then loads up the gear they have provided for him and boards the flight to Churchill. The study is being conducted as a direct result of the complaints received by thirty seven of the members of the House of Commons – most of which who have come from groups such as the Fish and Game clubs and members of the ammunition manufacturers. Convinced that the wolves are a scourge and a threat to both the hunters and the caribou population, the government provides Farley with the means and opportunity to conduct an intensive study of the lupine population. Farley does as he is hired to do, but his studies in no way corroborate the governments' theories or preconceived notions. In fact, the government couldn't be farther off course in almost all of their assumptions. The wolf population is much less than their estimates; the wolves do not kill the caribou wantonly and without cause and never leave food untouched; the wolves are not reducing or killing off the caribou but in fact act to strengthen the population by eliminating the sick and weak; and wolves do not survive solely on caribou for food, but rather use mice as a staple. All of this changes Farley's point of view, but sadly they will have little impact on the government.

Language and Meaning

This novel has some interesting language conflicts. First, Farley struggles to make himself understood by Mike, the young Inuit trapper that he meets just a short time after he is dropped on the ice in a remote region three hundred miles northwest of Churchill. Although Mike speaks a little bit of English, his language is limited, and Farley spends a great deal of time explaining the gear and reasons for it. Mike is superstitious to begin with, and there is little that Farley does to alleviate his concerns. When he leaves abruptly to care for a 'sick mother', Farley is too preoccupied to put together that his photos of an autopsy scared the Inuit half to death. When he later returns with his cousin, Ootek, the language issues are even further complicated. Ootek is a naturalist and shaman of some repute, but his English skills are all but non-existent. Though Ootek is more interested in the studies Farley is engaged in than Mike is, Mike is often necessary to translate or explain the behavior and comments Ootek makes. Farley soon learns some words in Inuit, including 'Nahk' meaning 'no'; and 'Shweeanak' which translates as 'pretty poor'; he still relies on Mike for explanations of critical events. Another language issue that occurs is Farley's attempt to understand the conversations of the wolves. Ootek is fluent in wolf conversation, and though Farley is skeptical at first, Ootek proves himself again and again. By the time Farley's time with the wolves is at an



end, he can hear the differences in their voices, and recognize them apart from each other. He can also tell the difference between them singing in preparation for a hunt, seeking each other, or communicating their locations to each other.

Structure

Never Cry Wolf is a novel of two hundred and sixty pages, which are divided into twenty four chapters. Each chapter is further labeled with a title that describes the basic content of that chapter. The chapters range in length from six to thirteen pages and average ten pages. Farley Mowat documents his efforts to study the wolves, and the struggles he faces to understand their behavior as it compares to the information he is given beforehand. He meets two Inuit natives of importance – Mike and Ootek, who fill in some of the gaps in his lupine education, explaining the reasons for some of the wolves' behavior and their language and communication between each other. While Farley is determined to document everything from a scientific standpoint, he is hard pressed not to take naturalist and shaman Ootek's word for his interpretations and observations. Though there are cultural differences, and at times it makes understanding difficult, Ootek is a fountain of information. He also spends a great deal of time learning from Farley which is sometimes more education than he is ready for or equipped to accept. The end result of all of Farley's studies reveal that the government is sadly and grossly misinformed where wolves are concerned. Sadly, Farley also realizes that none of the information he has gathered will make any difference to the outlook and behavior the government has where the wolf population is concerned. This realization comes to him when he comes face to face with Angeline and one of her pups, and vulnerable, his first instinct would have been to kill them, despite everything he had learned about them. Disappointed in himself, he realizes the truth. He had not been sent to find the truth but more to support the government in its systematic slaughter and trophy style behavior. Wolves will always be feared, he finally understands, and as such, his information is worthless.



Quotes

As you are aware, Lieutenant Mowat, the *Canis lupus* problem has become one of national importance.

-- Farley's Chief. (Chp. 1 paragraph 27)

Importance: Farley's chief as he explains the fact that Farley has been chosen to be the one to 'do something' about the problem that the wolves are causing, insisting that the Department had received thirty seven memoranda from the Members of the House of Commons whose constituents were complaining that the wolves were killing all of the deer. As such, fish and game clubs and manufacturers of ammunition stood to suffer financial hardships.

Come back for you in the fall sometime if the old kite hasn't pranged.

-- The ex RAF pilot. (Chp. 3 paragraph 22)

Importance: The pilot makes this comment to Farley as he drops him off three hundred miles or so northwest of Churchill to begin his studies of the wolves, reminding Farley that now he is isolated and on his own for several weeks.

The teeth were massive in construction and capable of both rending and grinding action, which enables the owner to dismember the largest mammals with ease, and crush even the strongest bones.

-- From Government Book. (Chp. 6 paragraph 10)

Importance: This is a quote from one of the books given to Farley as reference material by the government before he leaves Ottawa. It is one of the things that Farley reads after having had his first encounter with a wolf.

What the hell do you think you're at, you.... You.... Peeping Toms!

-- Farley (Chp. 7 paragraph 10)

Importance: Farley explodes when he realizes that the wolves he's been waiting for all day and watching for, have been watching him with some amusement.

For God's sake HOLD IT!

-- Farley (Chp. 10 paragraph 32)

Importance: Farley hollers to George as he tries to stop him from going into the area in which he had set traps to catch some of the mice the wolves were eating to determine how rounded their diet was. He wants to explore the wolves' diet, but he doesn't want George to be hurt.

Eskimo thinks if man eat mice his parts get small like mice.

-- Mike (Chp. 11 paragraph 15)



Importance: Comment made to Farley as he tries to explain why Ootek found eggs and gave them to him to eat.

Caribou are coming; the wolf says so!
-- Ootek (Chp. 13 paragraph 7)

Importance: This is one of many instances in which Ootek proves he is able to understand the conversations being had by the wolves with each other.

He tell his wife the hunting is pretty bad and he going to stay out longer.
-- Mike via Ootek (Chp 13 paragraph 20)

Importance: Ootek tells Mike, who relays to Farley the message George sends to Angeline, and though still skeptical, Farley is surprised when George shows up as he told her he would the following afternoon.

I go now, back to the camp, and there I will think hard of many things and I will forget what you have told me.
-- Ootek (Chp 20 paragraph 31)

Importance: Ootek is deeply disturbed when Farley goes into great detail about the parasites that live in caribou, especially since he has been eating caribou all his life. Farley doesn't realize his mistake until it is too late, but then tries to convince Ootek that he was only kidding.

One of my trappers come in an hour ago and he seen fifty deer down on the ice, all of 'em killed by wolves – and hardly a mouthful of the meat been touched!
-- Trader (Chp. 23 paragraph 15)

Importance: The feelings of negativity surrounding wolves are strong and locals insist that wolves are responsible for killing caribou without need until they've become scarce to a point of rarity. To prove the point, a Trader tells Farley that Farley can see for himself first hand if he goes with him now, insisting that the wolves are responsible for a slaughter of deer nearby.

It will grow in any of them, though perhaps not as well in people.
-- Farley (Chp. 20 paragraph 26)

Importance: Farley explaining how worms in caribou meat that is improperly cooked can be ingested and continue to grow in another host.

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