



Magazine

The

Wacky FUN



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Wacky Fun News

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New Website Survey - Win a \$15 Amazon e-gift card!

As you might have seen, we recently revamped our website design, and we'd love your feedback! If you have a moment, please take our brief 5-minute survey below before July 31st. On completion, you'll also be entered into a drawing for a \$15 Amazon e-gift card! Remember, with our smaller subscriber base, this is likely one of your best chances to win a raffle!

Take the survey





ANIMAL SPOTLIGHT

MARKHOR

Joshua Brown

Welcome back, everyone, for today's Animal Spotlight. I would like to take a minute to shine the light on, and share the stage with, a little-known creature. This animal is remarkable and unique among its common brothers and deserves a shoutout. Ladies and gentlemen, I speak of the markhor.

The markhor is a species of large, wild goat indigenous to South and Central Asia. Incredibly, some of these animals even live high on the Himalayan mountains! Its name comes from the Persian word for "curly" because this goat has beautiful, twisting horns. They grow in a corkscrew shape, angled away from the back of the head rather than forward, and can reach lengths of sixty-three inches on the males.

A markhor usually stands between 26-45 inches at the shoulder and can weigh up to 240, or as little as 70, pounds. Their coats range from light brown to black, being smooth and short in summer and long and shaggy in the winter. These amazing climbers have adapted to mountain life and can be found at altitudes of 11,000 feet!

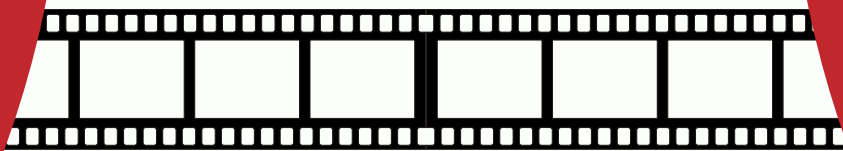
Thankfully, the markhor are not marked meaning there are plenty of them in the wild.



MOVIE REVIEW

The Great Outdoors

Joshua Brown



Today, I shall be reviewing a film—The Great Outdoors. Dan Aykroyd and John Candy play the main characters, a businessman and his family man brother, respectively. The movie follows the feuding brothers' families as they attempt to enjoy a summer at a resort town.

It is rated PG, though it does contain some themes that may be best for ages 13+. The Great Outdoors is an amazing summer classic. If you would like a few sneak peeks as to what you'll find, read on. If you want to go ahead and bring it up on your streaming service and watch it without any spoilers, stop now.

In this movie, you'll be pleased to find:

1. Gangster raccoons.
2. A scary, car-climbing bear.
3. A dead fish in the shower.
4. A ninety-six-ounce steak.
5. A bat in the house.
6. And, of course, the bald-headed bear.

It is a hilarious, summer comedy that will leave you laughing long after the credits have rolled



Top 10 Movies

John V

We polled people* about what their favorite movies were. Check out the top three answers below. See the full list on our blog. Let us know what you would have chosen differently!

1

Lord of The Rings

Votes: 7

The Lord of the Rings movies trilogy is certainly a cinematic masterpiece! Did you know, however, that it wasn't originally supposed to be 3 movies? It's initial script was for two movies, and the movie's producers even suggested condensing it into one movie to help the ever-growing budget. I wonder if they only made one movie if it would have been about eight hours long. 😊



2

Harry Potter

Votes: 5

In Harry Potter, they ride the Hogwarts Express to get to school. They enter through a portal in between platforms 9 and 10 at Kings Cross Station. The portal of course isn't real, but you can get a photo-op with the sign and a luggage cart embedded into a brick wall at the Kings Cross Harry Potter Shop!



3

The Princess Bride

Votes: 5

Do you remember the scene where a captured Westley meets Count Rugen? He gets a shock when he sees that the Count is the "six-fingered man"! During their conversation though, the count knocks Westley out with the butt of his sword. The funny part is, Westley's actor, Cary Elwes, actually was knocked unconscious accidentally and had to be taken to the ER!



READ THE FULL LIST HERE



*Votes were collected from a sample of 42 individuals, including our newsletter subscribers, players on the Christ Community Church (Birmingham, AL) softball team, Cornerstone co-op (Birmingham, AL), and employees at Daxko. Each participant had three votes, with no repeats allowed.

Hunt for the Lost

Chapter 3

Joshua Brown

READ CHAPTER 2 ON OUR BLOG! 

Leokah awoke to the sound of someone prodding logs with a fire poker. He rose slowly to a sitting position, letting the blankets slide off his torso. Jakob sat on the hearth, trying desperately to give the fire new life after a night of decay. Leokah scratched the side of his face, feeling the beard that was growing there. A whisper of cold air tickled his face as the bathroom door slid quietly open, and Seth entered.

“Morning,” the human said.

Leokah yawned, then wiped his eyes with the back of his hand. “Morning, Seth.”

Jakob hissed triumphantly as an orange flame licked hungrily at the wood he had just piled inside the fireplace. Leokah slid his legs off the side of the bed, stood sleepily, and walked to the window. The ground outside was glistening with dew and the shady patches under trees and eaves were white with snow. Standing in his warm, woolen under-pants and fleece pullover, the chilly air leaking through the cracks in the window frame felt refreshing.

“Let’s get something to eat!” Seth said, standing at the door that led to the hall, “And we’ll wake the girls while we’re at it.”

Leokah guessed the true motivation behind his wanting to leave: he feared the two Shifters. He remembered when he had been just as afraid of Shifters. He had been different then; he had been normal.

“We won’t hurt you,” Leokah told the boy softly. “We’re here to help you.”

Seth leaned against the door, a heavy sigh escaping his throat. “You Shifters just make me so nervous. One of my sisters is gone, and we might never get her back. My other sister is sharing a room with the things I’ve always been taught are bad.”

Leokah felt a stab of hurt at being referred to as a thing. He considered being a Shifter to be like having a double life. He was still a human, and he certainly wasn’t a thing.

“We make you nervous?” Jakob asked incredulously. He laughed in a high pitched, unbelieving way.

“Yeah. I mean, you could turn into a snake or whatever and kill me.”

Jakob shared a look of disbelief with Leokah. “Do you know what happened to my brother, who was another unlucky thing like me?” His voice grew serious and more snake-like.

“No,” Seth admitted, pressing his back harder against the door.

“He was killed by humans. Know why? Just because he was a Shifter. He was still a human, still my brother—he could just become a giant snake whenever he wanted. They said he was too dangerous. They took him from me!”

Jakob fell to his knees, slamming his hand into the floor. “They took my only family from me!”

Seth’s eyes had become fixed on his feet, and Leokah noticed that a tear rolled down his cheek. “I had no idea.”

Jakob shook his head swiftly three times, side to side. “I will never forget that humans did that to me.”

“Look... I’m sorry that I called Shifters things. I never meant it like that. I really do appreciate your help.”

Jakob rose and rubbed the hand he had used when striking the floor. “Let’s get something to eat.” His tone indicated that he would need time to forgive the human.

Leokah, after passively watching the exchange from beside the window, moved to his bed. He pulled his fur-lined pants on, then his boots, his leather jacket, and finally his satchel, which he slung over his shoulder. He fluffed the pillow and neatly folded the blanket before setting it in the middle of the bed. He knew that the human that came to clean the room for the next guest would see three beds—two unmade and one that someone had taken the time to help with—and that the person would assume the Shifters had left the two beds in a mess. He knew that’s what they would think. He fixed it up for the maid anyway.

The three exited the room, closed the door behind them, and made sure that it was unlocked. Seth knocked on the door opposite their own to let the girls know it was time to get up, then they headed toward the main room of the inn. Leokah glanced back as they emerged beside the grand fireplace. Adelle stared back at him from the doorway of the room she had shared with Natalie and May. Her hair was a mess and her face was tired, but she was still very pretty. He smiled slightly. She scowled and yawned before vanishing again.

When he caught up with Seth and Jakob, they were waiting in line to get breakfast. Leokah swept his gaze around the room while he stood in the queue. Many humans had entered for breakfast, and more were still sleeping in their rooms—he could hear one person snoring violently enough to be heard even from the front room. Delicious smells wafted out over the crowd from the kitchen. As he surveyed the room, Leokah noticed that he had an observer. The odd Shifter that had been in the dining room the previous night was watching Leokah intently. He studied her briefly as she stared at him. As the line continued to move, an older man passed between him and his watcher. When the man moved, the Shifter was gone.

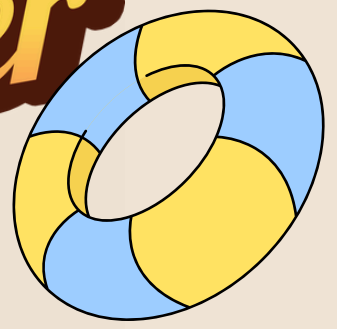
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A Fun Summer Day

Joshua Brown



I set out to compile a list of the best things to do during the summer. I succeeded in enumerating the top ten most fun activities to do while the days are hot and long. Deciding that the best way to find out the most popular things would be by asking people, I began inquiring of everyone that would answer me, "What is your favorite summer activity?" The responses poured in, varied and passionate. I have picked the best answers for each majority that made it onto the list.

"Swim in a pool," the kid next door said, dashing off to leap into his backyard oasis.

"Drink a big glass of Kool-aid," the girl selling beverages at the corner exclaimed. "Or lemonade," she added, holding up a picture of yellow.

"Go to a water park," the young boy cried as his family drove off, the car packed with towels, lunch, and everyone wearing swimsuits.

"Have a waterballoon fight!" three kids agreed, unleashing a salvo of splattering water bombs on one another.

"Go to the beach," a mom replied with a knowing wink, packing her kids into her car. "Keeps them entertained for the whole day," she whispered.

"Uh, play games all day," the kid with long hair mumbled, one hand clicking furiously on the keyboard, the other slinging the mouse this way and that.

"Invite everyone over for a neighborhood barbecue," the dad with the "Grillin' like a villain" shirt said proudly. "Everyone loves my cooking."

"Go fishing," the other dad with the larger flattop grill supplied. "The best thing you can do. On the lake, the river—anywhere."

"Watch fireworks," Joshua answered. "Lots of fireworks. Sorry, John, about almost blowing your dad up last year. We'll only buy fireworks with square bases from now on, so they won't fall over."

So there you have it. A guidebook for everyone on how to spend your summer. You know what isn't on the list? Sitting here reading this article. Go out and do one of them! Now!

(Please understand that this narrative is entirely fictional and the list compiled within it was constructed by me alone and has no data to support it.)

Book Review: The Eye of Minds

Joshua Brown

Author: James Dashner

Publisher: Delacorte Press

Grades: 7th and up

Pages: 352

Genre: Young Adult, Science Fiction



5 Stars



Today, I shall be reviewing the first book of the Mortality Doctrine, The Eye of Minds. This fantastic book was written by James Dashner, the author of the bestselling Maze Runner series. In my opinion, this book, along with its two sequels, is better than the Maze Runner saga.

The book follows the story of Michael, a kid in a future world where virtual reality is just as or more important than the real world. Michael desperately wishes to become experienced enough at gaming to be able to play the most sought-after, lifelike game: Lifeblood Deep.

After a disturbing encounter in the VirtNet, the Virtual world into which one plunges their mind to do all the things you can't do in real life, Michael is contacted by the government. An Agent Weber wants to enlist him to track down a cyberterrorist going by the name of Kaine. Michael accepts the challenge.

Together with his two friends, Sarah and Bryson, he seeks to find the mysterious, villainous gamer. Venturing into the darkest corners of the coded world, they will face programs meant to destroy their very minds, fight sinister gamers that only want to see them fail, and, most dangerous of all, confront the powerful Kaine.

The start of the trilogy is a thrilling, suspenseful read that will drag you into the early hours without you realizing the time has passed. The Matrix-like theme adds an interesting flavor of allure for the modern generation. With his trademark twists and turns, Dashner does not disappoint in weaving an intriguing story. Targeted at young adults, I would also recommend it for those middle school and above.

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Thanks For Reading!