



WYOGA HUNTING STORY CONTEST WINNER

The “Hay Maker” by Mike Fackler



BIG GAME HUNTING

The sun had barely broken day when we began seeing deer. It was early November and the weather was unseasonably warm. It certainly wasn't the kind of weather known for producing good deer movement. Yet there we were, right in the thick of the morning commute from food to bedding. It wasn't long into the hunt when I looked up and saw a big bodied deer distancing itself from the herd. It was headed to a notch located at the base of the rock wall about 350 yards in front of us.

We were able to get the big bodied deer in the spotting scope. My friend Jim Schell from Rough Country Outfitters made a quiet whistling noise which told me what he was looking at was something special. He turned subtly and said, “Mike, that is your deer. He is a 150” giant for Wyoming. Are you ready for your hunt to be over on the first morning?” After seeing Jim's response to the whitetail in his scope and knowing he has seen literally thousands of them here in Wyoming, I responded with a “Yes.”

The adrenaline began to surge. We quickly got into position and readied for a shot. As we got into the position, the giant buck turned his head revealing the mass and palming of his tines. “Mike he is at 350 yards. Are you comfortable?” “Yes sir, I'm steady and ready,” I replied. “Call the shot.” As the cross hairs found their way to the kill zone right behind the bucks front shoulder, the buck quickly bounded away to the safty behind some trees and began to make his way to bed down for the day. Jim had history with this buck. He told me last year they had named him the “Hay Meadow” buck because he was always down by the hay meadow. They had been watching him for years and were excited to see what the buck had turned into because they had



chosen to manage the herd. For the record, I called him the “Hay Maker” buck. He was the largest whitetail I had ever had in front of me over my 26 year hunting career.

It took a couple of days for us to get back on him. Truth be told I had seen a couple of deer I would have loved to have on my wall, but I told myself I wouldn't shoot unless Jim got excited. After pulling off a great buck I told Jim, “I'm not shooting until I see you get fired up.” Jim asked, “You trust me to find you a deer that good.” “I do,” I replied. We quickly headed back to the bucks core area. After glassing the area we noticed he hadn't made his way down to the hay field yet. Jim said, “I have an idea, lets go see if my hunch was right.” As we came around the bend, Jim quickly brought us to a stop and through up the optics. With excitement in his voice

he said, “Mike there he is, there is your deer. He is the one to the left.”

Now you have to understand what I was seeing. I was seeing a field full of 75 plus deer and most of them were to the left. “Right by the tree line at the base of the creek,” he said. Now we were in the chips. I didn't dare look at his tines. My family had been praying. My boys wanted dad to shoot a giant. My wife wanted to see me get a giant. This was a deer of my lifetime in front of me at 150 yards. I asked the Lord to help me make a good shot and provide a quick kill. The gun was up, the deer was clear, when the rifle kicked back into the pocket of my shoulder. The giant buck took the 180 grain bullet right in the vitals. He responded by clearing the field but it would be his last time in this field. We both dropped about the same time. The hunt was over. The harvest was successful. The shot clean, the death quick.

The buck now sits in my house as a reminder to me and my family of God's beautiful creation, along with the memories of a great hunt in Hulett, Wyoming. Special thanks to my friends Jim & Dusty Schell from Rough Country Outfitters. As men who love the outdoors, love the hunt, you helped a friend achieve a goal of a lifetime. I am forever grateful. I'd like to thank all Outfitters for the opportunities they provide people like me with. May God bless your Outfitting business, as you help people pursue their dreams.

Mike Fackler is a Pastor in Casper, Wyoming at Highland Park Community Church. He often combines his love for Jesus and hunting during the weekend services. He is already counting the days until his next hunt. 🍖