

TOUGHEST HUNT

of my Life

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #270 —

It was just another 14-day Safari in Africa; we've hunted there many times, so it didn't seem necessary to ask a lot of questions. But this turned out to be a walking safari, in the highlands of Ethiopia and there was more walking and more climbing than I could have ever imagined. In eight days of pursuing the Mountain Nyala, at an elevation of 8500 feet, my PH and I walked 87 miles and climbed 7200 feet, on those rocky trails. First safari on which I've ever lost weight.

Everything started routinely, a 12-hour direct flight from Chicago's O'Hare to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Then, a 7-hour drive across the Great Rift Valley into the southern highlands. And finally, a 45 minute 4-wheeling trip up the mountain to base camp, arriving just before dark.

The next morning, Brenda and I hunted in opposite directions, a short distance from camp. At noon, the PH's said they would like to move us to a spike

camp on the next mountain to the east, where there was a better chance for the Nyala. They would move me today and Brenda tomorrow. Just take the minimum essentials; it should be a short hunt; sure! Back down the mountain we went, in the safari car, across the small valley to the base of the other mountain. There was no road to spike camp; so, we climbed nearly a thousand feet, over rocky trails, for nearly two hours.

Next morning, we were up early and out looking for Nyala,



This is typical, but certainly not the worst stretch of trail. Every footstep had to be taken with extreme care.

about a mile from camp, with no luck. Back for lunch, Brenda had joined us. That afternoon my PH and I pushed to the south end of the mountain and had a slow, careful walk back to spike camp after dark. Even with flashlights, the walking was much tougher than during daylight.

That night we made another plan – a sub-spike camp at the far, south end of the mountain, an hour

“Even with flashlights, the walking was much tougher...”

away from spike camp. This would allow us to hunt at first and last light. We developed a daily routine, hunt till 9 or 10 each morning, then walk back to spike camp for lunch and some rest. Depart at 3:30 pm for the hunting area, hunt till dark; then Mountain House dinner at the campfire, and sleep at sub-spike camp – repeat as necessary. On the eighth day, my Nyala was down. Toughest hunt of my life!

USA
Midway

Larry Potterfield
Nyala Camp
Southern Highlands
Ethiopia, Africa
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This was sub-spike camp, just a campfire and a few tents – but only a few minutes from hunting. Spike Camp was a hard, one-hour walk to the far ridge, over the top of the tents.



The Mountain Nyala is exclusive to Ethiopia and the primary reason for our safari. Shot him on the 8th day of Safari. Rifles Inc., Remington 700, 300 Win. Mag., 250 yards.