



I hand Bear a snack bar and take one for myself. There's barely any city food left.

I feel the air rifle in my hands. I can't put it off any longer. I've been listening and listening for drones, but there's nothing. Did we finally lose them?

"We'll catch a rabbit today," I say. "Or one of those pigeons."

Bear looks up at me to check I mean it and I nod. We have to. We have to start providing for ourselves or else we'll starve. We're wasting away.

After we get water and there's still no sign of the drones, it's really obvious what has to happen. I've got the air rifle in my hand, unlocked, and the first time we see a rabbit, I raise it up and pull the trigger.

The pellet doesn't fire all at once like you think it should. I keep squeezing the trigger and when it finally releases, the

rifle rams back into my shoulder.

"Ouch!" I yell as the air rifle drops to the floor.

"You have to be ready for the recoil," Bear says jauntily.

"Don't you remember that, from the *Campcraft* book?"

"I guess not, Bear," I drawl. "Thanks for the reminder."

"You should spread your legs out more. For balance."

I stay on my feet for the next rabbit. I miss the rabbit, of course I do, but leaves fly up just near where it was before it scarpereed. Which means I didn't miss by much. Ghost scarpers too – immediately, fast. Gone.

Bear looks astonished. "You did it!"

"I didn't," I say, frowning. "I missed."

"Almost though."

The wood pigeon, when we see it, is just off to the side from us, pecking through leaves methodically for grubs. I've loaded another pellet and I do it all again, legs apart this time, ready, and the pigeon miraculously keels over.

For a moment I stand there, unsure what to do. Bear leaps forward.

"You got it! You actually got it, Ju!"

There's this grey pink white bird, floppy in his hands, its head lolling. I shudder, but Bear's dancing round.

"Let's make a fire!"

"OK, but we should move on first, in case the drones are still following."

"I'll carry it though," Bear says importantly, swinging