

A Raven Named Marvin

Value: Respect Authority

"Hannah, come outside." Hannah's best friend Betty called up to her. Hannah slipped downstairs.

"What is it? It's the middle of the night." Hannah said shivering a bit from the cool night air..

"Its Lorenzo, he's run away, we have to help them find him!" Betty said with deep concern and worry in her voice. Lorenzo was a neighbor of Betty's who lived several houses down. Many times when Hannah was over, they found Lorenzo wandering the streets or in some strange place, just not being home. He told them things were not good there because his new step dad was mean to him but the girls didn't know what to do.

"How do you know he ran away?" Hannah whispered.

"Officer Duncan and Youth Director Cindy came over and told my dad. Dad works at the youth center and they have been trying to help Lorenzo." She told her friend. It was true that Lorenzo had come to Officer Duncan several times. The kind policeman wanted to help more but Lorenzo would not trust him completely. Youth Director Cindy had even tried to come over and visit Lorenzo at home but when she got there, usually Lorenzo was mysteriously "not here." So all of the people who could help him most were frustrated because Lorenzo seemed to avoid them.

"I know where he is." Hannah suddenly said snapping her fingers. "Sabines woods! He said he goes there sometimes because other people are afraid of it." Hannah remembered as Betty nodded knowing she was right. "Let me get some clothes on and we can go look for him."

The girls entered the woods fearfully. It was so dark and their little flashlights didn't help much. "Lorenzo," they tried to call out while whispering at the same time for fear they would wake up something nasty in the woods. "Lorenzo, its Hannah and Betty, come on, come home with us." They huddled together and whispered.

"I can take you to him." A voice said firmly and the girls yelped with surprise. They looked around and didn't see anyone. "Up here sillies, on the branch." And they looked up and there was a very large black bird looking at them and talking.

"Did you talk?" Betty asked fearfully. "I never heard a crow talk before."

"Yes I did but don't be afraid. I am here to help you. You are looking for Lorenzo I think. I know where he is." The bird said.

"Oh please help us Mr. Crow, we are sorry we were afraid of you." The girls said together.

"I will do it but first of all, I am a raven, not a crow. My name is Marvin the Raven. Come along then, I think he is with Grimley the groundhog. They were going to make tea. Marvin flew ahead but low and slowly so the girls could follow. Somehow a light came up the further into the woods they went so they could see without their flashlights.

"Hannah, Betty, what are you doing here?" They suddenly heard the happy sound of Lorenzo's voice. He came running from a clearing that was just teaming with animals, many of them walking around on their hind legs, drinking tea and talking in a most sociable manner. Lorenzo ran to the girls and hugged them.

"Lorenzo, how long have you known about all this?" Hannah asked hugging him back.

"Lots of kids come here." He said with a big grin. "Lots of kids whose parents don't love them come here because its safer here than at home. Let me introduce you to my friends."

The next hour was amazing. They met Leonard the Llama who could quote Shakespeare flawlessly which is rare in a Llama. They met Grimley the Groundhog and his huge family of little baby groundhogs who loved to be petted. Grimley ideed make very good tea. They met Morris the Unicorn who really liked Betty and let her ride him.

"I didn't know there were real unicorns much less in our woods." Hannah said with amazement watching Betty hug Morris's neck as she rode.

"Well they keep pretty quiet and they like to be with others they feel safe around," Lorenzo observed.

"Everybody wants that." Hannah heard herself say under her breath. After the ride. Lorenzo introduced them to a huge black bear.

"Hannah and Betty, meet Rocco." He said pointing up. The bear was easily twelve feet tall, much bigger than any bear the girls had ever seen.

"Pleased to meet you girls." The bear said and then he bowed. Betty was a little afraid of him.

"Don't be afraid of Rocco, Betty." Marvin the Raven said landing on the big bears shoulders. Yes, he is very dangerous and anyone who would harm these woods would meet with a very bad mauling from Rocco. But you are friends of Lorenzo so you will always be safe with Rocco and with all of us here. Now Lorenzo, Rocco and I have a special mission to take you to meet the King and Queen of the Forest."

So Marvin the Raven lead Rocco, Hanna, and Betty on a treacherous mission to the far side of the forest, where even the most magical and courageous forest animals went. Their destination, to meet the King and Queen of the forest was by invitation only. Along the way, they crossed over streams of shimmering flowing gold only to find nearby terrible dangers from falling poison podsand screaming monkeys who seem bent on stopping

or destroying the party. But one mighty roar from the mighty Rocco sent the monkeys running and screaming back to their lairs high in the trees.

Finally, they climbed a tall hill to a clearing before a portal that was surrounded with ivory pillars and majestic although sometimes spooky gargoyles. Marvin the Raven landed on the head of one such gargoyle and commanded all to kneel and bow so to allow the King and Queen to enter.

"BEHOND THE KING AND QUEEN." He said with majesty and they entered.

"Hello Lorenzo. Girls you did a good job of saving him." Said the very familiar voice of the King of the Forest.

"Officer Duncan? You are the King of the Forest." Lorenzo said with a gasp.

"Hello Hannah, Hello Betty, Hello Lorenzo." A soft female voice soothed every creature there.

"Youth Director Cindy? How can this be?" Betty said rushing to her arms.

"Its true children." Officer Duncan said lifting Lorenzo lovingly into his strong arms. "We have known of the magic of this forest for as long as it has been here. We work in your town to help children like Lorenzo but our roles in the magical world of Sabines woods is a secret kept in the heart of all of its citizens. Marvin the Raven, Rocco the bear and all the rest you met last night, they serve us by loving and caring for children who are running from adults who hurt them. But you can trust the authorities in your lives kids. The policemen, the teachers, the church ministers you know, they are as magical as we because they have been placed on this world by Jesus for the purpose of saving children that need help, just like Lorenzo here."

"Now children, we will go to the youth center where your dad is Betty." Queen Cindy said taking their hands. "But you must all hold what you have learned here dear to your heart. You are now part of this magical world and you must help bring children to us that we can help with their family problems. Do you swear your alliance to the secret of Sabines woods and its mission to help good children get the help they need?"

And Lorenzo, Betty and Hannah all swore so their membership in this magical society was made eternal. And now children, you too have become aware of the magical secret of Sabines woods. You must swear your allegiance to its secrets and to the calling God has on it, on you and on you parents, teachers, policemen, firemen, youth directors and all the rest to rescue children who are in trouble and bring Gods love and peace to a troubled world. If you agree to be citizens of Sabines woods, then raise your hand and your teacher will receive your pledge and the magic will be yours.