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strange places easier

MR. CHOCOLATE & THE MAGICAL FOREST

"Don't go wandering off too far. We'll be eating soon, and remember what I told you!" Mom yelled, as I walked toward the fields of wildflowers, staring at the trees that seemed so far away.

"I won't be gone too long." I really didn't know how long I would be gone, but I didn't want to hear her lecture me any more today, so I told her what I thought she wanted to hear.

Ever since we moved to this farm, a few months ago, she has been telling me not to wander off alone, because she said there were a lot of wild animals in the forest in back of our property. She thinks that since I'm only an eleven-year-old city girl, that I should be extra careful because I don't know much about country living. I wasn't afraid, even though I didn't have any new friends, and I felt really bored. Besides, I had to do something to keep my mind off of my loneliness. I was more interested in finding something that someone who had been here before us could have left behind.

I was about half-way through the wildflowers when I realized my thoughts had wandered, and I hadn't been looking for old junk like I had set out to do. I found nothing in the whole field, except a path that led to the trees up ahead. I followed it looking for signs of people before me. I was getting a little

tired from walking by the time I had reached the trees, when I saw what looked like a river, running between a bunch of trees up ahead. Although, I was tired, I was so excited by the sound of splashing water, that I ran to find out it was a little stream, not a river. It was water just the same. It looked so refreshing. I sat down on a nearby tree stump and just observed nature for a while.

Maybe Dad had had a good reason for moving out here after all. It was kind of nice to be alone. It was such a nice change to be looking at this beautiful spot I had found, instead of the noisy, busy streets that I used to stare at through my old bedroom window, back in the big city.

Just then, I heard a splash, and out of the water jumped a small green thing resembling the frog's that I had only seen in books and magazines. I was amazed at the tiny features on his wet, bumpy body. I sat watching him silently. I didn't want to scare him away.

He started to jump towards a pile of old beer cans and garbage left by some litter bugs, who must have been here before me. It was fun to watch him jump, because the quick, jerking movements made him look like he had springs on the bottom of his feet. He was still close enough that I could continue watching, so I did. I was trying to stay quiet, hoping he wouldn't notice me, but then I had to giggle. This silly frog was eating the remains of a chocolate bar left in the garbage pile! I couldn't

stop laughing at him. It just seemed impossible that a frog would like chocolate! I began to laugh even louder, which made the frog hop away. "I hope I didn't hurt his feelings," I said quietly aloud. I really liked this silly frog, so I thought that I would follow him. I had rested long enough anyway, so I trailed him into the trees even further.

As I passed two of the largest trees, I felt a kind of tingling in my body. Suddenly, it seemed much more colorful and brighter in this mass of trees.

Just then, I heard someone say, "Hello, welcome to The Magical Forest.". I looked around expecting to find another human, but all I saw were lots of beautiful, smiling animals staring at me.

Then, the voice came again, "I see you have already met Mr. Chocolate, our sweet-toothed frog. My name is 'Dawn Fawn'. What's yours?" I could hardly believe my eyes, as I watched the words coming out of the smallest deer's mouth. Could it really be talking?

"What's a matter, haven't you ever seen a fawn talk before? Probably not. I didn't think humans talked my language 'til I stumbled into this Magical Forest a few months ago. I've heard them make noises before, but I didn't understand them until I passed between those two trees over there. That's when I realized that it was the gate to a wonderful, magical place. So what is

your name anyway?" The fawn asked while walking closer to me. She looked so friendly and soft that I just wanted to hug her.

"My n-n-name is Melissa, but my friends call me 'M-M-Missy.'" I answered studdering from nervousness.

I reached down and touched Dawn Fawn when she had gotten close enough. She was so soft. I couldn't beleive it. Then I was curious.

"How did you get your name?" I asked, now that I wasn't frightened any longer.

"Well, I always get up at the crack of dawn, and I'm so clumsy, that I wake everyone up. So all the other animals call me 'Dawn Fawn'. We will have to give you a new name, now that you are in our Magical Forest. Let's see...everyone, can you gather 'round so we can think of a good magical name for Missy here?"

All the animals came over, and even some that I hadn't seen yet came from behind trees and bushes, to help find me a magical name.

"I saw her first, so let me name her!" Shouted Mr. Chocolate, jumping as high as he could so he would get noticed.

Noone argued with the little frog as he sat for a moment thinking.

"I know, how about 'Sunshine'?" Mr. Chocolate screamed proudly, "Cuz, when she came into The Magical Forest, the sun began to shine."

Everyone agreed, and it was settled. My new name would be

Sunshine. It was so exciting to have my very own magical name, just like all of my new magical friends.

Just then, I heard my Mom calling me back to the house.

"I'm sorry, but I have to go home now, my Mom's calling me for dinner. Will you all be here again tomorrow?" I asked, hoping to see them again.

"We don't know for sure, because nothing is forever, even in The Magical Forest. But we hope to see you again Sunshine."

All the animals were waving their hoofs, paws, and wings as I walked through the Magical Gate between the two huge trees. But once I passed through and turned to look back, I only saw a few scattered animals eating grass and climbing up trees.

"I sure hope I remember how to get back here tomorrow." I thought out loud. "Maybe, if I take this scarf from around my neck, and tie it to this tree..."

"Melissa Sue...you better get home this instant or you'll be grounded!" Mom's voice was even louder now as I tied a quick knot and began to run home...