

Sam and Alex Help the Forest



HOME

Far, far up north there is a long road that winds around trees and leaps over hills. At the very, very end of the dirt and stone road sits a little log house that stands one storey tall. There are trees to the left, trees to the right and trees behind the little log house. Alex and Sam live there with their parents, but they have never, ever gone into the forest.



“The plants are tall and thick, so you’ll get lost,” their mom warns.

“The animals are hungry and mean, so they will gobble you up,” their dad says.

Alex and Sam aren’t afraid of the forest—not very afraid anyway—but their parents watch them carefully. Instead of venturing into the trees, they spend their time walking along the winding road. They walk until their feet hurt and then they walk back home. Every day, they see the same red stone sitting in the middle of millions of grey stones. Every day, they see the same tree branch shaped like a snake. Every day, they see the same glimpse of grey fur wiggling deep in the forest to the left of the road.

One day, Alex and Sam return from their walk and sit down at the kitchen table for dinner. Something has been bothering Sam for days.

“What’s wiggling in the forest, mom and dad? I really want to know,” Sam says.

Alex is curious too, “it’s grey and has fur.” Alex inches forward on the chair, almost falling off in excitement.

Mom sets down plates of salad in front of Sam and Alex,
“I don’t know what’s wiggling in the forest. I’ve never been in there because the plants are tall and thick!”

“And the animals are hungry and mean,” dad adds.

He looks suspiciously at Sam and Alex, “you better not be planning on going into the forest.”



Alex and Sam slump back in their chairs. That wasn't the answer they wanted to hear.

"If you've never been in the forest, then how do they know it's such a scary place," Alex asked. "It might not be so bad, after all!"

"We read about it on the internet," says mom. "We just don't want you to get hurt!"

The sun is setting making red light dance through Sam and Alex's window. They are tucked into bed, looking at the glow-in-the-dark stars on their ceiling in silence. They can't stop thinking about the wiggling grey fluff in the forest. Sam and Alex whisper ideas like "maybe it's a lost teddy bear" and "maybe it's a weird-looking plant" until they fall asleep.

The next morning Alex and Sam go for their daily walk. They walk and walk along the long road until their feet hurt. They come across the same snake-shaped stick and keep walking. When they see the same red stone Alex kicks it gently to Sam.

"Pass it back," Alex exclaims.

Sam and Alex kick the red stone back-and-forth until, WHOOSH, Sam kicks a little too hard and the red stone flies into the forest! They stand on the edge of the road, staring into the forest.

"We should go get it," says Sam.



“Are you sure this is a good idea, Sam,” Alex asks, as they hear a rustling from the trees and see a flicker of grey fur.

“Did you see that?” exclaims Sam, almost jumping with glee.

“I did! But what if it’s mean like the internet told mom and dad?” Alex asks, but Sam is already walking into the forest.

“We won’t know until we go in,” Sam yells back.



THE FOREST



Alex pauses for a moment, then runs after Sam, not wanting to be left alone. Sam and Alex walk side-by-side through the trees and they get further and further from the road. The hot sun beams through the holes in the treetops and the air feels dry on their skin. The deeper they walk into the forest, the more it smells like their dad's famous, extra-garlic caesar salad. They hear chirps and yelps and hums and whistles all around. They start to wonder where the wiggling grey fur went when they hear,

“OUCH!”

Startled, Alex and Sam jump. They look everywhere trying to find the source of the little scream.

“You stepped on me!”

The voice is coming from the ground. Sam and Alex look down to see a little green plant with a white flower that has three big petals and a little torn leaf. It's surrounded by a different kind of plant with white flowers that have four little petals.

“My leaf, it's broken,” the little plant cries.

“You're alive? I'm so sorry,” Sam says. “Is there anything I can do to help?”

“Wait a second,” the plant says. “The wolf told us about you.”

Confused, Alex and Sam say, “the wolf?” “Yes, the wolf!”



The little plant has completely forgotten about the broken leaf and is shaking its petals with glee.

“You’re here to help us!”

A voice comes from behind a dark tree beside

them. “You’re here to help us?”

“Who’s there?” Sam swings around to where they heard the voice.

“It’s me,” a red fox peeks its head around the corner.

“And me,” a little yellow bird chirps on the branch above them.

“We all need your help,” the tree beside them bellows with a deep voice.

“Us, but how can we help you?” Alex asks. “We’ve never been here before.”

The white flower, the tree, the fox and the bird all turn to look off into the thick, green forest. Alex and Sam hear the slow crunching of leaves and snapping of twigs as something walks closer.

Everything falls quiet. They see a glimpse of grey fur wiggling behind a bush, when out strides a wolf, its coat sparkling in the sunlight.



“Finally, you’re here,” the wolf says.

“How did you know we were coming?” Asks Alex.

The wolf ignores the question. “The plants and animals need you. They’re in danger. Only you can help them.”

“Why are they in danger?” Asks Alex, worried about their new friends.

“That’s for you to figure out,” says the wolf.