

The Quest for the Dragon



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Chapter 4: Talmae Forest

They began the journey, Dianne's heart thumping in her chest. What if they never came back? What if the enemy caught them? What if the dragon turned evil? Beauty seemed to know what she was thinking, and reassured her that if they stayed hidden the enemy would never find them. "And," Beauty told her many times, "I'm sure the dragon's good. I'm sure." In about half an hour, they approached the Talmae Forest. It stretched as far as the eye could see, but it was a beautiful forest. Exquisite flowers sprang up from the soft, grassy ground. Birds, oh, so colorful chirruped from in the trees, and beautiful wild animals scampered along the ground.



~It was a beautiful forest~

"Oh, lovely!" gasped Dianne, in wonder. "Can we fly inside the forest, instead of over it?"

"I'm sure we can manage that," smiled Beauty, and with a swift swoop, they were flying along, inside the forest, as Dianne admired everything she saw. She loved the tiny scarlet birds best.

Suddenly, just as Dianne was admiring an animal that was just like a soft, furry ball that Beauty called a 'chipperwink,' Dianne heard a cry. Next thing she knew, she was out of the sky and facedown on the ground. She looked up and saw Beauty flutter down, unable to fly. Dianne almost immediately knew what had happened - a branch had torn Beauty. She could no longer fly. As she picked her up she could see clearly; a big rip. "Oh no!" yelled Dianne. "We will have to walk!"

"Shh, Dianne, there may be guards!" whispered Beauty. Cautiously they tiptoed through the forest, for what seemed like forever. Beauty was whimpering in pain, and Dianne's wonder at the beauty of the forest seemed to die away. Finally the sun started to go down, and they set up the sleeping bags and prepared for a long, sleepless night.

When they arose the next day they continued walking for what felt like hours, before Beauty yelled, "There it is! I see the end of the forest!" and together they walked to the very end of it.

"And *that* was a short forest!" exclaimed Dianne, tiredly.