

Forest Girl

By Oriana Wasmund, Ontario

Part 1 - Moose

It was hot. *Too hot*, Sarah thought. She tried to console herself that she was on the way to a pleasant campground, but the long drive and the heat made her unhappy. The car came to an abrupt stop as her parents decided, for the umpteenth time, to argue about whose turn it was to drive. Finally, Sarah's mother got out of the car and into the driver's seat. Mr. Faithendrew had picked an "interesting" spot in the middle of a forest in Florida for the family to have a vacation. Too bad it was somewhere hotter, even than how was in Ohio where aunt June lived and even hotter than in Virginia, where Sarah lived.

Last year, her father had picked a leaky cottage in Alberta. The time before that, her mother had chosen somewhere in British Columbia that had billions of mosquitoes, and their tent had been knocked over by a black bear.

Sarah wondered if she would add this trip to her list of unpleasant vacations when, before she could wonder another wonder, she was knocked back into the present.

"RUTH, LOOK OUT!" Sarah's father yelled.

Sarah knew her father only used Mrs. Faithendrew's first name if in an emergency. Sarah looked up instantly.

A moose was crossing the road! Desperate to avoid the lumbering beast, Sarah's mother swerved the car! It crashed front first into a ditch, where the car rolled twice, then careened into a huge tree. Her parents screams stopped immediately and so did her own, as her world faded into complete darkness.

Part 2 - Awake

When Sarah's eyes opened, she couldn't see much. It was dark. She sat, quietly taking everything in. Her trail of thought came back, and she stood up. When she tried to rise however, she was restrained.

"Oh, right..." she mumbled through her parched lips. "My seat belt."

Sarah quickly unbuckled, then hastened to the front seats for her parents. She brushed her hair back so she could see better, only to find that her forehead was covered with something hot and clammy. Sweat and...

"Blood! Oh, no, I'm bleeding!" Sarah cried.

She hurriedly looked in her backpack for something to bandage her head with. Finding a t-shirt, she wrapped her head with it firmly. Sarah proceeded to look for her parents. When she reached them though, her breath caught in a sharp intake.

"Oh no, oh no, no, no!"

Her parents were covered with blood, and her father's neck was on a painful looking and her mother's injuries were just as bad. Sarah stooped to check their pulses. Neither was alive any more.

"Nooo!" Hot and salty tears poured down Sarah's face and landed on her dry lips. Sobs wracked her body, and she folded into a ball, and unleashing her sorrow, she fell asleep.

Part 3 - Hurting Inside

When Sarah awoke, she got out of the car through the dented side door. She then hauled her purple backpack from the car. After gazing at her dead parents again sadly, she sighed and sobbed quietly. She thought hard. *Father and Mother are dead...They didn't deserve to die. Why did mother have to swerve like that? I don't want to leave t-them... b-b-but th-they're dead. I'll have to leave them a-and try to survive I guess...*

She sighed and shook her head, as if to clear it. Then she took almost all of the food and water in the car. Sarah unpacked all of the things she didn't need out of her bag: hair bands, dresses, sandals. She kept some changes of clothes and her sneakers. With her backpack full of things

she needed, she looked back at the wreck once more before she trudged away into the humongous forest.

Part 4 - Survival

Sarah had been spoiled she would admit. She had always tried to wear fancy clothes, which wasn't wrong in itself, but only to show off isn't right, and hadn't done much work around the house. When she thought about it now she could see that.

She also wished she had studied nature more, her sneakers were full of burrs, she was damp with sweat, and her hair looked as if she'd never seen a hairbrush before. The wound on her head had scabbed over nicely, so she put the used shirt into her bag. She'd been walking for a while, so she sat on a boulder in the next clearing that she came to.

Part 5 - To Save a Mockingbird

The clearing had lots of nice palm trees and other plant species that Sarah didn't recognize. There were also some large pink and white birds, Sarah thought they were ibises. She was hungry, so she uncapped her water bottle, drank, and took some bites of something that tasted suspiciously of sardines and jam. Her father's "cooking". The reminder of her deceased parents brought tears to her eyes, already red and puffy from weeping. She wiped them away as if afraid someone would see. Just then there was a loud, startling "SQUAWK!" that made Sarah jump up in surprise!

A grayish bird had fallen from the treetops, and then landed on the ground about 4 feet away. One of the bird's wings lay at an ugly angle. Broken. Sarah wasn't educated much about wildlife, but had always had an interest in birds. She loved studying them. So she recognized this one as a mockingbird. They could imitate many sounds. Sarah walked over and gently scooped it up into her lap. It slowly came to, but when it saw Sarah, it went frantic! It flapped, desperately trying to escape her. But when Sarah held it gently, yet firmly, and when flapping its broken wing hurt, it quieted. She covered it with her grubby shirt, and it fell asleep after a while - when birds can't see, they stop moving.

Sarah thought about the mockingbird that she had. It was a girl. From her studies she saw that this bird wasn't fully grown. Maybe she could train it to sit on her shoulder. Sarah decided that she would keep the bird.

"You'll need a name...uh, how about...Survivor! Yes, that's perfect!" Sarah exclaimed. Then, for the first time since the crash, she grinned.

Part 6 - Attack!

Sarah walked on in quiet thought. Before this, she'd hardly known how to make a decent meal! And she had certainly spent a lot of time on a electronic. *Fat lot they had helped!* She snorted at her forlorn sarcasm. *Why, machines do a lot of work! Probably too much. They make people lazy and crude.*

"Nature is better for you than machines", she mused.

Sarah looked down. At her feet a river was flowing, cool and fresh. She knelt to drink, but at the moment she touched it, it seemed to rise up and leap at her! Greedy glinting eyes, and yellowed teeth like knives leapt towards her!

Sarah shrieked as she scrambled back and rammed into a tree. Sarah ran for a while, but the beast hadn't followed. She sighed with relief.

"Nature may be better, but certainly more dangerous!" Sarah laughed nervously, at her close encounter with the alligator.

Part 7 - Lost Forever?

Four months later Sarah plopped down in a patch of grass near bushes with green and brown lizards frolicking in their branches. She considered trying to eat a lizard, but decided against it. The lizards were too cute and too much effort to try to eat. So instead, she grabbed a vine of wild berries and ate. After a while, she hadn't slumped over dead, so she decided they were fine to eat. She called them lizard fruits, because of all the lizards.

After she had finished, she took out Survivor. She had twisted vines to make a sort of contraption that held Survivor. It was sort of like a sash, except it could hold a bird. Her mockingbird was now trained well, and perched comfortably on her hands.

Sarah was eleven now, and cooked using a small fire that had taken a long time to learn how to make. She now drank from rivers, lakes, and streams (wary of dangers though) and ate larger lizards, small mammals, nuts, berries, eggs, and reeds. She had been sure that she would get back to civilization, but doubted it now. If she managed to get back however, she could go live with her aunt June, in Ohio.

Epilogue

One day, in August a tall, slender, teen girl strode out of the woods, then walked over to, and down a sidewalk. She had darkly tanned skin, and wore a knee-length tunic of animal pelts. Her hair reached below her waist, and she was barefooted. She carried a faded and torn purple backpack in one hand. On a shoulder, a gray bird perched. She walked right up to a lady and asked plaintively "Could I use your phone?"

The End