

Wolf

By Jazmine Joseph

So there I was, rummaging through my backpack for my flashlight. The trees were almost completely blocking out the sun, and it was pretty dark. My friend Hannah was walking alongside me, enjoying the Honeybear Camp hike.

"Are you hungry?" I asked Hannah. She threw back her sleek brown hair and said, "No, but I kind of, well, *really* gotta go."

"Go where?" I questioned.

"I said *go*."

"Oh."

"There isn't a restroom for, like, miles," she groaned.

I pondered that alarming truth. Finally, I yanked her by the arm out of our camp group over to a nearby bush.

"Do it."

"What!?"

I didn't have time for words when both of us heard a faint sound. It traveled smoothly to our ears.

"Do you hear something?" I whispered.

"Umm, yeah."

"Come on, let's go check it out!"

Almost instantly I was leading a reluctant Hannah to the mysterious sound. The magical noise sent a tingle through my spine. After getting whacked in the head a million times

by low-lying branches, the sound became clear. The bushes and trees parted in an unnatural way, and a couple of trees appeared to have been twisted, tangled, and stretched into a throne-like seat. For a split second a wispy, cloudlike outline appeared in the throne, but immediately vanished.

All of a sudden, two enormous, rugged wolves burst in out of nowhere, baring their steak-knife sharp teeth and growling maliciously. I sprang back with horror.

Again, out of nowhere, a beautiful, shiny wolf pranced to the two ferocious wolves and spoke.

"Those creatures you are growling at, those are humans. Bow down and show mercy."

Faintly Hannah gasped, "They talk," and fainted into my arms.

I stood there for what felt like hours, staring at the bowing wolves when I felt rather dizzy myself. Hannah regained consciousness after a minute.

"Now, you two," said the beautiful wolf to Hannah and I, "Follow me." The wolf's voice was mystic and soothing.

We trudged on, amazed. The sound grew louder, and seemed to grow in a proud sort of way. At last, the wolf stopped at a large den of hard rock that sat beside a crystal-clear pond. A frog jumped out, and croaked loudly.

"Come inside. It's rather chilly outside, isn't it?" the wolf offered.

"Umm..."

Clearly, Hannah was having a hard time believing that this was happening, but me, I thought this was just nuts...

We entered into the cave and sat on the hard dirt floor as the sleek wolf instructed us.

"My name is Dahlia. I am a member of the Tolohint tribe."

Hannah and I exchanged looks.

"Our tribe is like a very large pack, but contains a Queen, rather than an alpha male or female. I, as you may have noticed, am the Queen."

We had not noticed that the wolf right before us was regal, but that made no difference to her, whatsoever.

"Our tribe lived in peace, up until a number of rattlesnakes threatened us."

"What was that sound and why are you telling me this?" I finally shouted. I must have come off harsh because Dahlia looked offended.

"Ahh, yes, the sound, that is an enchantment. You have passed the barrier of magic, the sound you heard as you entered the tribe forbids hearts not pure," Dahlia said, stretching her well-groomed paws.

"And you," said Dahlia, "are the only ones that the snakes fear. I will use my powers to warp you to a tall oak tree. There you will find a wise old owl. Now, off you go."

"But..." I began to say when Hannah and I realized we were not inside the dark cave any longer.

"Dahlia!" I cried.

"Do not fear," said a voice inside the tree.

Hannah almost tripped backwards over me.

"Come. Take this. Use the charms wisely."

The old owl who had spoken handed an old leather book to Hannah. She looked as if she was about to faint again.

All of a sudden we heard hissing. The owl was gone. A group of dangerous-looking rattlesnakes slithered towards us. Hannah whimpered.

"Hannah, the book!" I yelled.

She scrambled to open it. The front had a picture of fangs on it. Hannah opened it and we both read aloud.

"Come hither, come slither, come venom and fangs, hissing and spitting, come, right now, we shall save the day!"

The snakes cowered. A wispy outline appeared once again, but much brighter. Dahlia's voice rang out, "You shall never attack us again, foul snakes. And you two," she said, "thank you."

The campers surrounded us as if we had never left. The day went on, but when I climbed into my bunk, there was a note.

Thank you. You and your friend are truly brave.

I applaud your heroism.

You have saved the wolves of Tolohint.

-Dahlia