

A Walk Through the Forest

*by
Sarah Harvat*

It was a normal, humid Saturday evening, when I decided to ask my brother if he wanted to go on a walk through the forest after dinner. He said, "No." I wanted to go but my parents told me I had to take at least one of my siblings with me. So right before we sat down at the table to eat, I asked Cynthia if she wanted to go. She agreed.

After dinner, around 5:30, Cynthia and I left the house and set off for the forest. By the time we reached the rocky path, the sun was starting to set. I turned around and looked out at the beautiful horizon. The purple mixed with the orange, and the pink tinted clouds. I told Cynthia to look behind her at the house. The sun's beams made the perfect glow of the rainbow's colors, mixed into one big portrait making the house absolutely beautiful. She said "It's pretty Jenny, but can we go for that walk now?" I said, "Sure, Cynthia lets go."

As we entered the forest, I looked down at little Cynthia, only 6 years old. Just looking at her face, and all of her flaws, reminded me of myself when I was 6, nine years ago. Finally, I grabbed her hand and started to walk deeper into the dark forest, where no light could be seen at the end of the large, long path.

Once Cynthia and I were halfway down the path, Cynthia saw a figure the shape of a human. The figure was kneeling down beside a large, rapidly moving body of water. The unusual person glanced up at us and before we could blink, the human quickly turned and started running away. Cynthia got excited and ran after him, or her. She found herself at the edge of the water and tried to cross using the slippery sailing stones without falling into the rapid waves.

I tried calling her back, but she wouldn't listen to me. I crossed the water on the stones and my foot slipped. Luckily, I was able to get up and continue running even with a twisted ankle in a soggy shoe. I chased her onto a smaller path with fewer trees. She stopped just as I called her again. She was staring at something that was intriguing to her. Once I caught up, I found the object she was looking at was a cup.

The cup was made of glass with the top ring broken off and chipped into sharp shards. On the front of the cup was a symbol of a tiger's face. I asked her why she was looking at it crossly. She replied, "Because it has red stains in it and I don't know what they are." I glanced at the inside of the cup, it was blood and I knew it, but I lied and told her it was fruit punch. "You know the stuff that's red that you drink at home sometimes."

She replied "Oh, that's cool. I wonder how the cup got here though. That's an odd symbol." I didn't feel the need to answer her question. Suddenly, it started to rain. I stood there and looked up at the sky, but I couldn't see anything. I looked down to see Cynthia darting off to look for dry ground, or shelter to hide in, or under.

Soon Cynthia came across a rusting; steel fence covered with color faded graffiti and red stains that she still thought was fruit punch. (But it was really blood.)

Cynthia crawled underneath the rusty fence and ran into an old, dark house. The only light came from one lit candle revealing Oakwood floors, walls and a table with wood utensils. In some of the corners there were either water stains, or medium sized blood pools. Which little Cynthia didn't notice because of the dim lighting. I was running fast to catch up to her. Then I heard screaming. I started running even faster. Finally, I heard the screams die down.

I started thinking of how I might never get to see Cynthia again if I didn't hurry. I started sprinting through the rain, even though the ground was sliding beneath my feet. I tried so hard to get through the mud but with my twisted ankle it made it tough to even think about making it to the door, but I did it.

I ran in to see Cynthia tied up in a chair with duct tape over her mouth being dragged down the steps to the basement. (Which should have been the first floor of the strange old house) I heard a rip and a screech as if the duct tape was being ripped off of her mouth. And it was. Soon I started hearing more screams saying, "Jenny! Mommy!" I thought fast and ran to the nearest cabinet and looked for the best weapon I could. Hopefully it would still work.

I found a gun, knife, a broken bottle, and a case of unused bullets. I grabbed the most lethal weapon. The gun and a few bullets. I looked a little closer at all the weapons again. They all had one thing in common; they all had a symbol of a tiger's face on them. I still didn't know why all these items had the same symbol as the bloody cup Cynthia had found on the path. I picked the gun back up, stopped worrying about the symbols, and started focusing on my plan to save my sister.

I held the gun close to my chest and kept my hands away from the trigger. I stopped at the edge of the corner and took a deep breath. I could hear her whimpering and still slightly crying still saying "Jenny, Mommy." Over and over again. Soon I heard footsteps coming back into the room where my little sister was. Cynthia screamed in horror "JENNY!" I could hear my heart thumping so fast it was like a motorcycle that was going as fast as it could.

Cynthia made out another small cry but I couldn't quite understand what she was saying, I had a feeling it was my name again though. I turned the corner thinking that there could be other unimaginable things in that room. And there was. There were scalps, hanging skeletons with rotten meat on the ground below them, and there were decaying bodies on the ground. But most importantly there was little 6 years old Cynthia with her hands and feet tied together lying on an old Oakwood table with dried blood stains and slits from a rusty old chopping axe. Also in that room was the unusual human from the forest. He wore black hoodies that were more like a shorter kind of cloak and black blood stained pants. (Which you could barely see the blood stains unless you looked really hard like I did.)

I slowly walked into the room and stayed close to the wall and as quiet as I could be as I held the gun close to my chest and tried to hold my breath I loaded the gun and

got ready to shoot.. I raised my gun just as the unusual human started to raise his axe over top of my little sister. Cynthia turned her head and closed her eyes. I screamed "DROP THE AXE!" I aimed to fire close to the persons head. I missed. The stranger dropped the axe and darted out the back door into a secret passage way that was covered with green camouflage netting.

I let him go, ran to my sister and told her "You never leave me again like that! Now do you see what could have happened to you?" She replied, "Yes!" I untied the ropes around her hands and legs. I picked her up, and carried her out of the house. When I went to put her down, she clung on to me and wouldn't let go. I put her on my back and darted out of the woods. I told her she could never tell Mom, or Dad, what had happened. She agreed but asked, "Aren't we going to tell the police?" I replied, "Yes."

When Cynthia and I got home, it was dark. It was 9 O'clock, and Mom was waiting for us. She asked what took us so long. I said "We were looking at cool rocks and Cynthia found a cool cup." She told us to get a little snack, brush our teeth and then hurry off to bed. On the way back to our room we talked about how we would go to the police early in the morning. In our room that night, Cynthia asked if she could sleep in my bed because she was scared to sleep alone. I replied, "After tonight, I don't blame you. You can sleep here if you want." Cynthia jumped into my bed and she and I lay awake as we thought about what had happened over and over again. Finally, Cynthia fell asleep at 12 and I followed shortly after.

The Next Day...

When Cynthia and I woke up, we brushed our teeth, made breakfast for our family and wrote a note saying,

Dear Mom and Dad,
Cynthia and I have gone out to a play ground for Cynthia to play with her friends because there's only two more weeks of Summer vacation. We have taken our bikes and we'll be home later.

Love,
Jennifer

Cynthia and I taped the note to the fridge, where Mom or Dad would definitely see it. When Cynthia and I left, we headed straight for the police station. We decided to tell the police that we didn't tell our parents. But we would tell the police to do it because it might make them take it smoother with a police officer telling them instead of their kids.

When we reached the police station we asked to talk to the chief. We reported this whole strange event. Cynthia told and showed where this had all taken place all the while holding on tightly to my hand.

The police found the house and the objects in it but they didn't find the person.

When they didn't find the stranger, we left the scene. The cops kept searching and exploring the tunnel the human escaped through.

Cynthia and I waited weeks for the police to give us more detail on the person or weapons. Soon after the strange event had been reported, there was another unexplained mystery. The chief of police disappeared and was never heard from after that day.

The symbol of a tiger still haunts my dreams, and neither Cynthia, nor I, will ever walk into those woods again.