

The Wild Woods

By Joanna and Mizuki

Grace, a 10-year-old girl is an orphan. But, she wasn't like the others. She was much smarter. She could build her own treehouse, invent her own video game, and write her own book. On her third day at the orphanage, she snuck out an open window and fled into the Wild Woods.

There she wandered around for a while before she found a huge tree in the middle of the woods. She walked around the tree observing its surroundings and sturdiness. She decided to make her "home" here.

Meanwhile, four animal friends - Crystal (a fox), Bonnett (a deer), Hedwig (an owl), and Oreo (a cat), were out for a hike. They were looking for a human friend, but humans weren't allowed to venture into the Wild Woods because dangerous animals lived deep in the woods.

Back at the tree, Grace cheered, "There! Finally!" as she placed the last piece of her treehouse. Her home included a fort, a tire, a bench, and a secret tunnel leading to a secret area. The treehouse and the bench were made from wood she'd chopped down. The fort was basically a tent covered with a few blankets. The tire was made from an old tire and a rope. Last, but not least, the secret tunnel was a path leading to her secret room, covered with a dirt and tiny rocks.

Nearing Grace's new treehouse, the four animal friends were heading home. Paige, Crystal fox's little sister ran up to them.

"There's a girl settling in our house!" she exclaimed.

"What? Really?" the animal friends shouted with glee.

"What are we waiting for? Let's go!" shouted Bonnet the deer.

By the time the friends reached THEIR treehouse, they heard a girl screaming, "Help me! Somebody, help me!" at the top of her lungs.

In front of her, stood a small wolf.

"Oh, no! What'll we do?" Oreo the cat cried.

Then, Hedwig spotted their cage.

"Look guys! There's our cage above the wolf! Now's the time to activate the system," Hedwig suggested.

Little Paige spotted the button first, located behind the wolf.

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"Hoot! I have an idea! I'll fly around the wolf to distract him while you three," whispered Hedwig, pointing with a feathered wing at Bonnet, Crystal, and Oreo, "attempt to push the button. And you, Paige, will stay here in case we get stuck or hurt."

"Awww! Come on! I want to take action, too!" Paige complained.
"Hoot Hoot!" Grace heard, just as an owl swooped right in the middle of her and the wolf.

The wolf snarled and tried to bite at the owl, but the owl was just too fast. The wolf started to chase the poor owl.

"I better run and help somehow," Grace thought. Grace grabbed an iron stick. "Should I whack him or throw it at him?" Grace wondered. She leaned down and grabbed two more long, iron sticks, just to be safe.

The iron sticks struck hard on the wolf's backside.

"Owwwww! Owwwww!" The wolf howled and whimpered, as she ran away.

Grace and the animals cheered.

"Hey, owl, thanks for helping me out back there," Grace sighed with relief. "You're welcome," Hedwig hooted.

"What's your name? I'm Grace Cahill," Grace explained.

"I'm Hedwig and these are my friends-Bonnet, Oreo, Crystal, and Paige," Hedwig introduced.

Suddenly, little Paige stepped forward.

"I have a question," she muttered, shyly. "How do you understand what we're saying? I mean, you're human and we're animals."

"Very good question," Grace answered.

"You see, Paige, I was born with the ability to talk to animals.

"Where do you all live?" "We live Oreo meowed.

Crystal the fox mumbled, "And we see you decided to also."

"Oh, sorry about that," Grace replied, sheepishly, and suggested, "Hey, I can make you extra rooms; would that be okay?"

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Bonnet thought for only a second and replied cheerfully, "Of course!"

"Well then, I better start working on your rooms," Grace exclaimed.

A few hours later, Grace had cut out four additional doors on the tree, made a straw bed for Bonnet, laid out leaves for the fox family, decorated an old pillow for Oreo, and made a nest out of sticks, leaves, flowers, and feathers for Hedwig. Later that night, they lay spread out on the grass looking up at the stars.

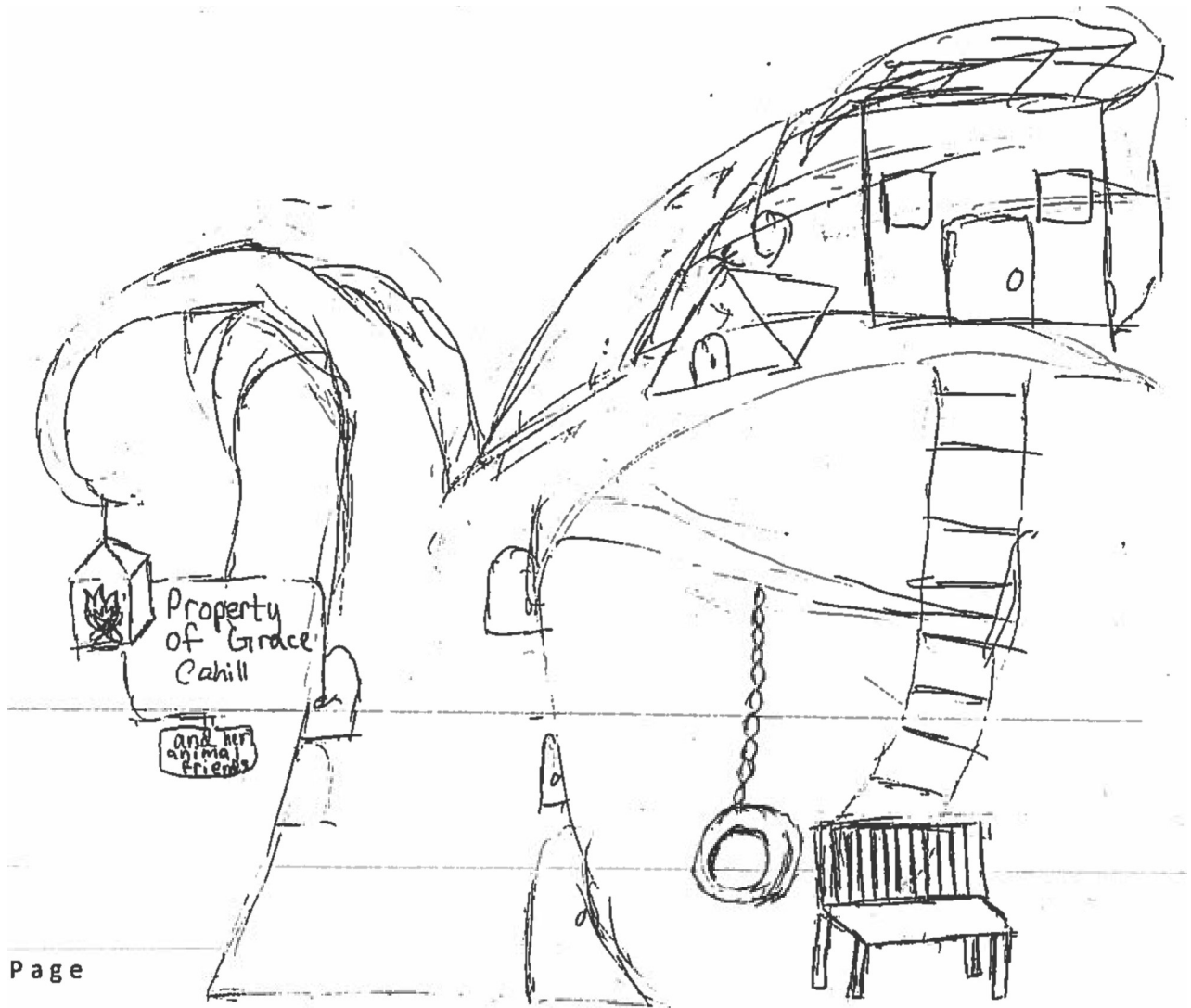
"You know, I like living in the Wild Woods much better than an orphanage" Grace whispered.

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Epilogue:

Grace lived in the Wild Woods for six years, before being caught sneaking back into the orphanage to check on her best friend. So, she started living in the human world again, but still visits her forest friends.



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