

The cool, crisp fall air wrapped itself around the thinly sheltered tent, blowing itself into any openings.

The people inside rushed to cover up the holes in their worn-out tent, the air blowing out their candles and primary sources of warmth, forgetting the second most important thing they had with them..

The food.

^~Part 1- Shadows~^

Brown, a sleek, gold-speckled squirrel, jumped down from her safe tree, where she hid from danger within its thick canopy. The scent of food was sensed for miles around the human's campsite, and Brown knew that if she wanted to get anything, she would have to be the first-but she had to be fast, or something might carry her away instead.

She scrambled her way through the camp's bear traps, sticks and thorns sticking out of the dry ground, and thick brambles separating the corner where the magical container was.

This was it. It was like she won the lottery. She had made it, and the prize was hers. It was all just sitting there, waiting.. for her.

Until, of course, she saw a dark shadow growing overhead.

It was the one thing Brown was scared of the most...

The most cruel, violent animal of the forest..

The bloodthirstiest fiend there ever was....

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-^Part 2- The Owl-^

The owl's cries echoed overhead.

This was it. Brown was done for.

Let's see.. her cousin Maryflower could have her tree..

Her brothers Gray and Grey could share her winter stash of nuts and berries...

Berry and Nut could have her stash-tree where she hid the stash..

She was sure Springy, her neighbor, would enjoy some of her artifacts like that cool neon green she found the other day, or the glowing stick she found last winter that shines randomly..

And the birds next-tree would LOVE for her to be moved out. Those bird-brains.

Brown's friend Daisy would probably want a piece of her winter stash, so she could share with Gray and Grey...

And I bet Sunflower would lo-

H O O!!! H O O !!! H OOOO OOOO!!!!

The horrific Owl circled hungrily around the boxes full of food. It was almost as if it hadn't noticed Brown yet- but Brown kind of doubted that. After avoiding the monster that was the owl for many moons, she knew that the more she moved, the more her chances of being taken were.

Brown closed her eyes, her mouse-like body shivering in fear of the Owl.
The owl was getting closer,
..and closer,
..and then it dove.

The owl dove immediately for the crates full of various human-food. It completely ignored Brown-thank goodness- and it struggled to grasp onto the crate's lid, but was successful and stole as much as it could carry. Dropping the crate onto Brown's long tail, it flew away to whatever sad place it lived in.

Brown couldn't believe it. Was she really.. safe?

She couldn't believe it at all. She tried to scurry off as fast as she could, knowing very well that the owl may return..

But there was something holding her back.

She pulled..
And pulled..
And pullleeeedddd.....

But her tail didn't nudge one bit.

Tears fell from her honey-orange eyes, an image of the owl swooping down and swiping her off her feet, just to steal her from everything she'd worked for..

The cold, hard gusts of wind brought snow down from the skies, slowly covering the forest floor with a thick layer of ice. The cold was unbearable- and Brown couldn't do anything about it. She was left there, unable to leave, unable to find help, unable to breathe as the snow piled upon her. Brown was struggling enough to cope with the cold, ice making its way through her body.. her lungs were frozen, leaving her breathless as her whole body froze up.

She thought she could almost see a light..

This is it.

I'm going to die.

I can't do anything about it, can I?

The light..

Warmth..

My family....

...
...
...

.~Part 3- The Light~.

An almost soft.. thing wrapped itself around the shivering squirrel's body, trying its best to warm it before it went unconscious. The icy terrain only made it worse, a thick flurry of snow keeping the light from reaching the tent.

The creature had to guess where its own shelter was, its only light source useless in the heavy snowfall. A thick aroma was hidden under the snowfall... the scent of fire. Stopping, the creature looked to the skies for any sign of smoke. There it was! Over some thick bushes was the source of the smoke. Holding on to the small squirrel, the creature trudged its way through the icy snow as it made its way to the tent.

The tent was of a decent size for the number of supplies hidden within it- an infinite amount of candles, matches, canned beans, and all sorts of other items. There was another, less large creature within it too- who seemed to be annoyed by the new life to sustain. After all- if you were forced to stay out in unknown, freezing places, would you be a very cheerful person?

The creature set the small rodent down under a warmly-lit lamp, shedding its brightly colored fur and revealing a thinner self underneath. It looked around the well-organized space, grabbing random items from various places and creating a sort of nest for the small squirrel. When the squirrel was to wake up, it would find itself in a strange, but comfortable place.

And that, it did.

*A strange figure hovered above,
Excitement and relief visible on its strange face
What was so important?
Was I so blind as not to realize
Something beautiful, something wonderful
Occurring in front of my own eyes?
Staring intently at the figure
Silently begging for an answer
Is when I realize,
I am alive,
And that is a good enough reason
To be celebrating
To me.
☺*