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THE BLACK FEATHER

Amidst the cheerful chirping of birds and the gentle wind, she sat peacefully, capturing the beauty of the sunset on paper. As she drew, a raindrop landed on her painting, smudging the colors and changing her expression from contentment to sadness. She quickly gathered her belongings as a storm rolled in, darkening the sky and bringing forth thunder and rain. Her once beautiful dress became drenched. Sensing a dark presence, she turned around to find a dense forest, barely visible in the darkness. Suddenly, two piercing red eyes appeared and rushed towards her, terrifying her and causing her to fall off a cliff into the water below. Gasping for air, she struggled to swim, overwhelmed by panic. As the young woman sank deeper into the murky depths of the water, her body felt heavy and her limbs weak. The darkness surrounded her, swallowing her whole as her consciousness began to fade. The water filled her lungs, causing her chest to tighten and her vision to blur.

"Rose!" She woke up to a sudden voice, only to realize that what she had just witnessed was just a dream. It felt a little too real. Glancing out the window, she saw a crow sitting on a branch, watching her. She got up and changed before greeting her mother in the kitchen and eating her already prepared breakfast. As her mother complained about her hard work, Rose didn't pay much attention. She felt incredibly tired and lacked energy for even the smallest tasks, but she had to go to school. The day turned out to be quite boring, with Rose observing people walking outside and crows fighting for bread leftovers. After the bell rang for the big break, everyone went to the cafeteria to get food and catch up with friends from other classes. Rose's friends welcomed her and they decided to hang out in the forest after school, like a little camping trip.

At first, Rose wasn't really excited about the idea of venturing into the forest for their little camping trip. The memory of her dream still lingered, casting a shadow of unease over her. But as her friends spoke animatedly about the fun they would have, their eyes sparkling with anticipation, Rose couldn't help but feel a tug of curiosity. Perhaps, amidst the towering trees and the whispering leaves, she would find solace and a temporary escape from the weight of her dreams.

With a hesitant smile, she agreed to join them, hoping that the adventure would lift her spirits and bring a sense of normalcy to her weary soul. As the break ended, the group of friends bid their farewells, dispersing to their next classes with the promise of reconvening later.

The day dragged on, each minute feeling like an eternity as Rose's mind wandered to the looming excursion. The clock's hands inched closer to the final bell, and with each passing second, her heart fluttered with a mixture of anticipation and trepidation. Finally, the moment arrived, and the school day melted away, leaving behind a trail of forgotten assignments and unanswered questions.

Outside, the atmosphere was charged with the energy of youthful adventure. The sky above was a canvas of shifting hues, the dying light of the day splashing vibrant streaks of orange and pink across the horizon. The air held a crispness, hinting at the promise of a memorable evening ahead. Rose's friends gathered around her, their smiles infectious and their laughter contagious.

With a collective sense of excitement, they set off towards the edge of the forest, leaving the familiarity of the school grounds behind. The path ahead was bathed in the golden glow of

the setting sun, casting long shadows that danced playfully at their feet. The forest beckoned, its mysteries and secrets waiting to be unraveled.

As they ventured deeper into the heart of the woods, the ambiance shifted. The gentle rustling of leaves and the chorus of birdsong filled the air, creating a symphony of nature's melody. Shafts of sunlight filtered through the thick canopy above, casting dappled patterns on the forest floor. A blanket of moss-covered rocks and fallen leaves welcomed their every step, muffling the sound of their footfalls and lending an otherworldly hush to their surroundings.

Rose's initial unease began to dissipate, replaced by a sense of awe and wonder. The majesty of the towering trees, their trunks adorned with ivy and age-old wisdom, whispered ancient secrets that only the forest could comprehend. The air tasted fresher, carrying with it the scent of earth and pine, invigorating her senses.

Lost in the beauty of their surroundings, Rose's friends paused for a moment, their eyes meeting in silent agreement. They spread out a checkered blanket on a patch of soft grass, creating a makeshift picnic spot under the watchful gaze of the ancient trees. Laughter mingled with the sounds of nature as Rose and her friends settled down on the checkered blanket, their excitement palpable in the air. The forest seemed to embrace their presence, welcoming them into its ancient embrace. With each passing moment, Rose's unease melted away, replaced by a sense of belonging.

They unpacked their backpacks, revealing an assortment of sandwiches and snacks. The aroma of freshly baked bread and savory fillings wafted through the air, mingling with the earthy scents of the forest. As they shared stories and memories, their laughter echoed through the trees, intermingling with the chorus of birdsong.

Rose found herself getting lost in the tales, her friends' animated gestures and contagious enthusiasm captivating her. With each anecdote, the weight of her dreams lifted, replaced by the lightness of camaraderie and shared experiences. The worries that had plagued her earlier in the day dissolved into the backdrop of the forest, fading away like distant echoes.

Time seemed to stand still as they basked in the warmth of friendship and the tranquility of their surroundings. The fading sunlight cast a golden glow on their faces, illuminating their smiles and filling their eyes with a sense of wonder. The forest, with its ancient wisdom and untold secrets, held them in its embrace, weaving a tapestry of memories that would forever be etched in their hearts.

As the day transformed into evening, the forest around them took on an ethereal quality. Shadows lengthened, casting an enchanting spell over the landscape. The gentle rustling of leaves and the whispers of the wind seemed to carry a message, a subtle reminder of the transient nature of life and the importance of treasuring moments like these.

With the last rays of sunlight bidding their farewell, Rose's friends began to pack up their belongings, a tinge of reluctance tugging at their hearts. The forest had worked its magic, offering them solace and respite from the trials of everyday life. But it was time to return to reality, their adventure drawing to a close.

As they made their way back through the forest, Rose couldn't help but feel a renewed sense of energy and purpose. The weight of her dreams still lingered, but now it felt more manageable, overshadowed by the memories she had created with her friends. The forest had offered her a temporary escape, a sanctuary where she could find solace and recharge her weary soul.

With each step, the forest gradually receded, its towering trees becoming mere silhouettes against the darkening sky. As they emerged from the depths of the woods, the sounds of civilization grew louder, pulling them back into the realm of responsibilities and obligations. But as Rose turned to bid the forest farewell, she couldn't help but smile. She knew that amidst the chaos of everyday life, the whispers of the trees and the secrets of the forest would always be there, waiting to offer her solace and a reminder of the beauty that lay beyond the veil of dreams. And with that thought in her heart, Rose took a final glance at the forest, the place that had offered her solace and renewal, before reluctantly stepping back into the world beyond. She felt a surge of energy within her, a newfound strength that stemmed from the memories and experiences she had shared with her friends in the enchanting embrace of the ancient trees.

As Rose retraced her steps through the forest, the shadows lengthened, casting an ethereal glow over the landscape. The sunlight filtered through the canopy of leaves, creating a dappling effect on the forest floor. The rustling of leaves and the whispering of the wind seemed to bid her farewell, their voices carrying a message of hope and resilience.

The familiar sounds of civilization gradually grew louder, pulling Rose back into the realm of responsibilities and obligations. The cacophony of honking cars and bustling streets replaced the symphony of birdsong and rustling leaves, but Rose carried with her a sense of calm and purpose that she had found within the depths of the forest.

With each step, the forest gradually receded, its towering trees becoming mere silhouettes against the darkening sky. The air, once fragrant with the scent of earth and pine, now carried a mixture of exhaust fumes and the aroma of city life. The transition from the tranquility of the forest to the bustling reality of everyday life was jarring, but Rose clung to the memories she had created with her friends, cherishing the moments of laughter and camaraderie.

As she emerged from the woods, Rose's gaze shifted from the fading beauty of the forest to the familiar sight of her neighborhood. The houses, with their neatly manicured lawns, stood as beacons of familiarity, welcoming her back into the fold. The world beyond the forest seemed to lack the enchantment and mystique she had experienced within its ancient embrace, but Rose knew that the whispers of the trees and the secrets of the forest would always be there, waiting to offer her solace and a reminder of the beauty that lay beyond the veil of dreams.

With a renewed sense of purpose, Rose walked the path that led her back home, her steps filled with determination. The weight of her dreams still lingered, but now they felt more manageable, overshadowed by the memories she had made in the forest. She carried within her a sense of belonging and a renewed vigor, ready to face whatever challenges lay ahead. As she reached her doorstep, Rose paused for a moment, taking a deep breath. The echoes of laughter and the whispers of the forest still lingered in her mind, and she knew that even in the midst of the chaos and demands of everyday life, she could always find solace and strength within the sanctuary of her memories.

And with that thought in her heart, she stepped back into the world.

Suddenly she heard a sound, turning around to see a crow.

As Rose turned to bid the forest farewell, her eyes caught a glimpse of movement. A crow, perched on a nearby branch, observed her with piercing eyes. Its sleek black feathers shimmered in the fading light, contrasting against the backdrop of the darkening sky. Intrigued, Rose watched as the crow cocked its head to the side, as if contemplating her presence.

Curiosity sparked within her, and Rose couldn't help but meet the crow's gaze. There was an inexplicable connection between them, an unspoken understanding that transcended the boundaries of their respective worlds. The crow, sensing her intrigue, let out a soft caw, its voice resonating through the air.

Intrigued, Rose extended her hand towards the crow, her movements slow and deliberate. To her surprise, the crow mirrored her actions, hopping closer with an air of cautious curiosity. Its ebony beady eyes locked onto hers, mirroring the depths of the forest she had just left behind. They seemed to hold a wisdom, as if the crow knew secrets hidden within the ethereal realm of the woods.

With bated breath, Rose reached out her hand, her fingertips barely grazing the tips of the crow's feathers. The moment their connection was established, a surge of energy coursed through her veins. It felt as if a current of ancient knowledge and untamed magic flowed from the crow and infused her being.

Time seemed to stand still as Rose and the crow shared a moment of profound connection. The world around them faded into insignificance as they existed solely within the space they occupied. The crow, sensing her trust and openness, let out a gentle croak, its voice echoing like a distant echo of the forest.

Emboldened by this shared connection, Rose began to mimic the crow's movements. She spread her arms wide, embracing the sky above, and the crow followed suit, extending its wings in a magnificent display of freedom and grace. Together, they danced an intricate dance of unity, their movements harmonizing with the rhythm of the world.

As they moved in synchrony, Rose could feel a newfound sense of liberation coursing through her spirit. The weight of her responsibilities and obligations melted away, replaced by a lightness that could only be found in the freedom of the wild. In this moment, she understood that the solace she sought in the forest was not limited to the physical realm, but extended beyond, encompassing the very essence of her being.

The sun began to set, casting a warm golden glow over the world. The crow, sensing the encroaching darkness, let out one final, melodious caw, bidding Rose farewell. With a graceful flick of its wings, it soared into the sky, disappearing into the vast expanse above.

With a heart still aglow from the ethereal connection she had shared with the crow, Rose turned back and approached her humble abode. The warm, familiar glow of her home beckoned her, promising comfort and respite from the outside world.

Pushing the door open, Rose was greeted by the gentle creaking of wood and the familiar scent of home. The dimly lit interior enveloped her, casting elongated shadows that danced upon the walls. The fireplace crackled with warmth, casting flickering embers into the air, and the soft glow of candlelight created a cozy ambiance that invited her to linger.

Stepping inside, Rose found herself surrounded by the familiar comforts of her daily life. The worn wooden floors creaked beneath her feet, each sound a reassuring echo of countless memories etched into the very fabric of her being. The walls, adorned with framed photographs capturing moments of joy and love, whispered tales of a life well-lived.

Rose couldn't help but feel a weariness settle within her bones, weighing her down with the weight of the day's events. The ethereal connection she had shared with the crow lingered in

her mind, a flickering flame of wonder amidst the darkness. As she stepped further into her home, the comforting embrace of familiarity embraced her, enveloping her in a cocoon of solace.

And she drifted to the dream land.

The dream she had, seemed to be the same one as the last one, about drowning.

Before it happened again. And again. And again.

She was stuck.. stuck in a dream and she couldn't wake up.

She could only try to change the dream.

She did it once, and the crow didn't attack her, instead it saved her and flew away.

Leaving a black feather after itself, Rose picked it up and kept it.

She was still stuck.

Stuck in a dream, with a black feather.