

FORTY-THREE

It didn't take long for Brave to catch her, much to Moselyn's surprise. One moment, she was well ahead of him. The next, she leapt from one branch to another and nearly barreled him over. Somehow, he had gotten ahead of her and had been waiting for her. He lightly tapped her tail with a forepaw. "Tag," he chittered.

She stared at him, looked back at the other tree she had leapt from and back at him again. "How..."

He started typing away on his flatpanel before she could ask the complete question. "I live here for a season. I have all that time to learn all the branches and gaps in this part of The Refuge. Once I see where you were trying to lead me, I raced ahead by a different branch and waited." He held-up a paw sideways glancing up at the sun briefly. "It nearly the time Blossom asked for," he typed. "We should head back."

"Alright, but I want to try something first. Turn on the translator program, tuck your flatpanel on your back, and then climb on my back."

Brave's tail wigwagged in a slow circle over his back. "What are you going to do?" he typed before following her directions and nervously got on her back.

"Grab tight around my shoulders."

Once he did so, she quickly scaled the trunk of the tree, coming to rest on a branch another ten mites up. It sagged slightly under their combined weight.

Brave chittered nervously. "What you doing, Moss? We very, very high up. Snow no save us if fall from here."

Moselyn waited a moment for the translator program to do its job as she looked around.

"I wanted to see how easy the climb would be with you on my back," she replied. "We can go back down a way. I agree this is too high up. Hold tight."

"What?!" he cried out as he quickly wrapped his rear legs around her waist so he wouldn't flip off her back as she scrabbled straight down headfirst. She switched to a branch roughly half-way between where they had started and the higher perch she had just left. She picked up speed, running out on the branch.

"Moss, no! Space too far!" Brave screamed fearfully, his tail wigwagging in circles.

"For you maybe. Remember, I'm a Biggen," she replied as the branch sagged under them as she made the leap.

Brave continued to chitter scream as they passed through the 3 mit-wide gap. He squeaked fearfully as she grabbed onto the distant branch, barely making the landing. He lost control of his bladder, wetting his abdomen and her midback. Once they were on a more solid part of the branch, he leapt off her.

“I sorry, Moss. You scare me so bad; I lose control make bad water. I thought we would fall. Fall from this height, snow will no help cushion fall. Please no do that again. I clean your fur.” He started to move towards her back.

Moselyn was elated at pulling off the jump. She only half heard Brave. She only just then noticed the warm wetness on her mid-back and then caught the smell as the translator program finished its job. She stopped him just before he was going to start grooming her wet fur.

“No, Brave. I won’t make you lick off the urine. It was my fault. I’m so sorry I scared you so badly. I can be impulsive. I should have listened to you more. You are an adult. I have to keep reminding myself that.”

Brave drooped his tail. “You should no have to groom off my mess from your fur,” he chittered.

Moselyn listened to the translator program. “We Biggens clean our fur in a different way. Come, I’ll show you. We’ll need to go to Saniel’s family tree as that is where I left my stuff yesterday.” She looked about and drooped her tail. “But I have no clue which way we need to go.”

“This way, come,” Brave chittered. “As I speak before I know my way around this part of The Refuge. No more chase.”

“Agreed.”