

A Day in the Forest

PER JESPERSEN

Deena and Sarah spent their summer vacation with Deena's uncle Samoa, who was a retired teacher, living in a remote house in the middle of a huge forest. Every day they strolled with him in the forest, listening to his strange stories about trees, witches, and fortune tellers. There was no end to his stories — he could go on and on — so one day Deena asked him, "Where have you read all these stories?"

"I haven't read them. They just pop into my mind when I see things."

"How come?" You see, when I see an old oak

tree, I try to imagine the experience this tree is possessing."

"A tree has no memory," Sarah laughed.

"How do you know? Anyway, I said that I imagined it. All the people who have passed this tree during the years — lovers, walkers, workers — all kinds of people. And I imagine the tree telling me all this — and there you go — the story is there!"

"So you mean that the tree possesses stories," Deena said, pondering.

"No, but the presence of the tree makes my mind come up with imagination. When I am alone, I just see visions, but when I am walking with you, the visions come to words, and I tell you the story. Do you see?"

"No," both the girls said, and Sarah went on, "The story must be somewhere, before you find it."

Uncle Samoa frowned. "So you mean that stories are in the world beforehand, waiting for us to pick them up?"

"In a way," Sarah said.

No," Deena said. "Things are there — events are there — thoughts are there — and people's minds make connections between them."

"Oh, I see," Uncle Samoa said.

Deena went on. "For animals there are only things and events, and they do not connect them the way we do. They are not supposed to. But people have minds, and the meaningfulness of the human mind is to learn to connect events and things with their thoughts."

"So you mean that thinking is sort of a tool for connection and understanding," Sarah said.

"Not really. Thoughts are dead themselves — they can only come to life through emotions and fantasy. The ability to imagine things — to pick up stories as uncle Samoa does — or to make music or paint or dance or make a ballet — this ability makes it possible for people to connect all this in their minds."

Uncle Samoa listened carefully. Then he said, "What you say is ... well, mental creation or something like that. Does this mean, that you mean, that our goal is to create? That it is more important to create than to



Dana Spurlock, pen and ink, 1992

think?"

"Sure," Deena said. "Creation is there all the time waiting to be experienced by us, and waiting to be discovered all the time — on and on again. The deepest of our minds is creation and not thinking."

"So you mean," said Sarah, "that our fantasy and our imagination are the deepest of our ... I don't know ... the deepest of our soul, if we have one."

"That's it," Deena said. "Life is creation. Creation is there all the time, waiting for us to see."

"Look," Uncle Samoa said. "Look at that marvellous tree. See a story there?"

"Yes," Sarah laughed. "It's a story about love ... Man's love for Nature, and Nature's love for us."

"Or a ballet ... look at the leaves," Deena said eagerly. "They move in the wind like a ballet."

"I can almost hear the symphony," Uncle Samoa laughed. "The forest-symphony, telling us to take care of Nature — dance with it — pick up all the stories — make a painting of this marvellous world. I do agree with you — there is nothing but creation. So let's join our hands and dance to my house. I expect a whole orchestra waiting for us there!"

"This is just beautiful," said Deena. "Three people dancing in the forest, while the leaves make their ballet above our heads. I think I am going to fold out my wings and fly home."

"Sure ... why not! Everything is possible, when the mind is ready and open."

And there Uncle Samoa stood, looking at the two flying girls. "What a story," he said. "What a story!"

Courtesy of SK-Forlag, Randerup, Denmark

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