

## THE SCORPION AND THE FOREST

Deep in the ancient forest the animals, birds and insects were gathered around a great clearing. They had come to discuss the faint and distant warnings that had recently reached them. From across the Mystic River whispers reached deep into the forest. Strange forebodings came on the wings of majestic birds. Insects buzzed with unknown dread. The deer moved in a wave of fear. Something unknown, perhaps deadly, was threatening to reach the Great Forest by winter's start. The meeting went late into the moonlight. In the wee hours of the morning it was decided that a *Forest Protection System* was to be built on the far side of the Mystic River. The scorpion, known for architectural and engineering skills, would take responsibility for the important project to be completed by fall's end.

The next morning bright and early found the scorpion standing on the bank of the Mystic River. "Hello turtle" he shouted, "give me a ride on your back so I can inspect the other side of the river bank for construction preparation." "How do I know you won't sting me with your stinger", said Pleabie the turtle. "Don't be ridiculous replied Bougie the scorpion, I would drown too." Pleabie agreed and took Bougie across the river on his back.

Many weeks later as the leaves were beginning to turn yellow and red, Pleabie poked his head high above the water to see how the *Forest Protection System* was coming along. He was shocked to see only a few moss covered boulders piled up in a

heap by the river bed. Quickly he swam back to the other side of the river and called out for the scorpion. A few moments later, Bougie crawled out onto the river bank. Said Pleable, “autumn is upon us already, why have you not built more of the *Forest Protection System*?” Answered the scorpion; “I have been too busy remodeling and fortifying my own house. We have plenty of time, don’t worry, take my word I have amazing plans for rapid construction. Now take me across the river again so I can prepare the work.” Bougie jumped onto the turtle’s back. “Do you promise not to sting me” said Pleable? “I promise” answered Bougie .

Midway across the river the scorpion drove its stinger, filled with poison, into the turtle’s neck. “Why did you break your promise?” cried out Pleable. “I couldn’t help it. It’s in my nature.” replied Bougie. Only a small drop of poison could penetrate Pleable’s thick skin. He was still able to call out for help. Within minutes a giant golden eagle swooped down from the sky and with its powerful talons lifted the turtle into the air. The scorpion fell into the river and was quickly swallowed by the water.

Once safely on dry land, Pleable related his experience with the scorpion. After much consideration about the events of the day, all the animals decided that they must find another path to safety. As the sun began to set, they swiftly began to move deeper and deeper into the forest. When the darkness descended, there was only one thought burning in the minds of the forest-- never ever forget the lessons of the scorpion.

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