

Visitors to the Forest

It started like any other day in the forest. The birds began their singing when the sun rose, and all the creatures started to stir when the birds sang their songs. The deer slowly awoke and stretched their gangly legs. The rabbits shook their floppy ears and hopped out of their burrows. The bears woke up and looked around the beautiful forest. None of the animals knew that today would be unlike any other day in their memory.

The animals were very familiar with the everyday sounds that came from the woods. All of these sounds came from different types of animals. For the most part, their days were uneventful; nothing too strange ever happened. They all enjoyed their quiet lives and went about their daily business without any surprises. The animals lived deep in the woods, far, far away from civilization and the ever-present sounds that humans make. They had never even heard a person speak. Life in the forest was peaceful and pleasant. It was a tranquil existence.

The old bear, who the other animals called Paws, was especially aware of what happened in the woods. Paws was very old and knew all about the forest. He could remember stories from long before the others were even born. He could tell great tales about when he was a cub. Most of his stories were about silly animals or gossip he heard from the rabbits. Rabbits, you know, are quite well known for their gossip. He knew who all the animals were friends with and which creatures did not get along well with the others. Paws was also very intelligent. You don't live to be as old as him and not learn a thing or two. But today, Paws would discover something even he had never before experienced.

Just after the sun came out, a bizarre noise came from the woods. All the animals looked around in confusion. They could not tell where the peculiar racket was coming from. It was a very loud noise that scared the critters back into their homes. No one wanted to find what was making that horrendous sound. Anything that noisy must be huge. The deer thought they would surely be attacked by it. The rabbits were certain they were too small to face it. And all the birds flew away as soon as they heard the noise. Paws listened to the clamor. He could not figure out what would make such a sound.

After a little time passed, the animals went to see Paws. They all thought he would know what to do, or at least he would know what made the sound. As they gathered around Paws, they heard it again. At the sound, the animals jumped and began to tremble. They asked Paws what he thought it could possibly be. They began listing all the animals they knew.

"Maybe it's an owl," whispered the deer.

"No, it can't be an owl," argued the rattlesnake, "but it must be some kind of bird. No land animal I know makes a noise like that."

Then Paws spoke in his deep, calming voice. "That noise could not be coming from any kind of animal that lives deep in the woods. It has to be something new. Something that we have never seen before."

As they thought about Paws' words, all the animals nodded in agreement. Paws was the wisest bear they knew, so they figured he had to be right. They waited for him to tell them what needed to be done, hoping he would be able to solve the mystery since he was certainly the leader of the forest. Paws told them he needed time to contemplate their next steps, to think about what to do. Something this odd could not be figured out quickly. He told them to return later that night. Until then, they were to stay hidden quietly inside their homes where they would be safest. Whatever was making that sound wouldn't come any closer. Or at least they hoped it wouldn't!

Paws sat down and thought about what needed to be done. He did not want to go looking for whatever was making that sound by himself. He thought it would be best to get a group of animals together to explore the loud new arrival to the forest. For his companions on the journey, he chose the snake, the bluebird and one of the deer. The snake could be very quiet and slither up to whatever was making the sound without being seen. The bird could fly high up in the sky and look down to see what was being so loud. And the deer had such good hearing she might be able to lead them all to the strange creature by following the noise. Paws would, of course, be there because he was so big and strong. He was also the smartest animal in the woods. If they got into trouble, he would know what to do.

Paws gathered the animals he had picked, and they started out to find the creature making all that noise. The bluebird flew high in the air, looking all around to see if he could see anything unusual. The deer lead the way as she listened carefully to the direction of the sound. The snake slithered ahead to try to sneak up on it. Paws followed the others all the time trying to decide what to do when they found it. He knew he needed to have a plan that was very clever, but also very safe.

They all followed the sound as it grew louder and louder. They walked slower and more cautiously as they neared the noise. The bluebird chirped down to the others that he saw something moving below. It was only a few yards in front of them. They sent the snake ahead to sneak up and see if she could identify what was making the sounds. She slowly made her way toward it. As she got nearer, she hissed back at the group that she could see some kind of strange animal. In fact, there were three of them. She had never seen anything like them before. She called for Paws to come closer quietly. The bluebird was

perched on a tree branch up above and was amazed by the sight he saw.

Paws inched closer. He could just make out the shape of the three creatures. They were walking on two feet and making some type of den for themselves. All of a sudden Paws realized what he was seeing. All his life he had heard rumors about animals like these. He remembered that they were called humans, but he had never actually seen one. The humans were setting up a campsite. They went about their business without ever seeing or hearing Paws and his friends. They were very loud, talking and hammering their tent spikes in the ground. They clanged pots and pans and laughed happily as they tried to make a campfire.

Paws called his friends away from the campsite. He told them what he had heard about people over his long years. He told them how he had heard rumors once from a crazy old rabbit about a campground where people came to sleep outdoors overnight. This must be one of those campgrounds. Paws told them that he had always thought the old rabbit was just making up a story. He told them the people would not hurt them, but it would be best to leave them alone while they camped. He did not want to scare the people like the people had scared them with all their noise. The group took one last look at the people and started back to their homes to tell the others about these weird animals Paws called humans.

1. What best describes the rabbits?

- A. They liked to gossip about other animals.
- B. They were the most afraid of the loud noise.
- C. They thought they knew as much as the bear.

2. What did Paws tell the animals to do while he was thinking of a plan?

- A. Be thinking of a plan to discuss with Paws.
- B. Stay quietly in their homes to be safe.
- C. Select three animals to go with Paws.

3. How did the story end?

- A. The animals weren't sure the creatures were the humans they heard stories about.
- B. The mystery of what was making the loud weird noise was solved.
- C. Humans were setting up a campsite in the middle of the forest.

4. What was this story mostly about?

- A. Forest animals learning about humans for the first time.
- B. What humans do in the forest that scares the animals.
- C. How forest animals get together when they have a problem.

5. What was the bear like?

- A. He knew everything about the forest, even what made the very loud noise.
- B. He knew many tales about the forest and animals, but most of them were untrue.
- C. He knew the most about the forest and about the animals in the forest.

6. What was the main problem in the story?

- A. Strange things were happening in the forest that disturbed the animals.
- B. The animals were afraid to go out and look for what made a scary noise.
- C. The animals needed to know what caused a strange and very loud noise.

7. What showed that Paws was a wise leader?

- A. He knew that it would take time to make a good plan.
- B. He told the animals to go home and wait for his decision.
- C. He was ready right away to go after the thing that made the noise.

8. What did the animals think about the noise they all heard?

- A. Whatever made the noise probably wanted to find them.
- B. Something so loud must be very big and dangerous.
- C. It could have come from a small animal that makes weird noises.

- 9. What was the first plan the animals thought of to figure out what animal might have made the noise?**
- A. They asked Paws to tell which animals were not friendly.
 - B. Paws would go out to find what was making the noise.
 - C. They made a list of all the animals they knew.
- 10. What would probably concern Paws the most about having humans in the forest?**
- A. Humans would be able to get animals to come into their camp by offering them food.
 - B. The animals would soon have to move deeper into the forest in order to be alone.
 - C. Sooner or later the humans in the campgrounds would become a threat to the animals.
- 11. Why did the animals think that Paws could solve their problem?**
- A. They thought he was wise, and he was already the leader of the forest.
 - B. They thought he was bigger and braver than the rest of the animals.
 - C. They knew that the bear had lived in the forest a very long time.
- 12. What is the first thing the animals will probably do the next time they hear a loud weird noise?**
- A. Send out Paws to see if humans were making the noise.
 - B. Talk about whether the noise was caused by humans.
 - C. Decide if they should scare away whatever was making the noise.
- 13. How did Paws reason about the creatures that they found?**
- A. He wasn't sure if these were the humans that he had heard about because he had never seen one.
 - B. He was so surprised at seeing what had made the scary noise that he wasn't sure what to think.
 - C. He realized that the rumors about animals called humans who walked on two feet were true.

- 14. What were the first thoughts that Paws had about the thing that was making the noise?**
- A. It was something new that had just moved in, and it wasn't an animal.
 - B. It was probably an animal that lived deep in the woods and was new to him.
 - C. It was something that lived in the woods that none of them had ever seen.
- 15. Why was the sound so scary to the animals?**
- A. It could be a large hungry animal that was looking for food.
 - B. The animals only made loud noises when they got into fights.
 - C. It was different from anything they had ever heard before.
- 16. How did Paws show that he was wise when choosing the animals to go with him?**
- A. He would be able to stay behind and be out of danger in case they suddenly came across the creature.
 - B. He could get information from the sky, the ground, and the direction of the noise.
 - C. The other animals would be doing most of the work for him, and he would still be the leader and be safe.
- 17. What decision did Paws make about how to solve the mystery of the strange loud noise?**
- A. He would send some animals out to explore the woods ahead of him.
 - B. He would take three other animals with him to explore the woods.
 - C. He would go first by himself, and the three would follow later.
- 18. Which statement best tells what Paws probably told the rest of the animals when he got back to his home?**
- A. There are other creatures in the forest besides animals, and they might be dangerous.
 - B. There are new creatures in the forest that like to make a lot of noise and scare animals.
 - C. There is nothing to fear from the humans in the forest because all they want to do is camp.

19. What happened right after the bluebird saw something moving below him?

- A. Three creatures were seen moving around and making noises.
- B. The animals walked slower and slower, being as careful as they could.
- C. Paws sent the snake to go in and find out what was making the noise.

20. How did Paws decide the humans should be treated?

- A. He wanted to treat them the same way he would like the animals to be treated.
- B. He thought they should be treated with kindness unless they started to make trouble.
- C. He didn't trust the humans, but for now he would let them stay and not bother them.