

Rock: the boy and the rule

There was a boy. Seven years old, loving and kind he had the gift of sensitivity. This gift allowed him to take walks with his family to make them happy even though at first it was not what he wanted to do.

Then he realised that actually he did like being out in the woods. He looked up to the sky and noticed the trees reaching up to heaven and providing shelter to birds and animals and tiny insects. Closing his eyes he connected with the spirit of the place and found comfort and joy in the silence.

Following the path he picked up a stick for navigation and protection and a rock for power and strength. These were his only weapons against the wild animals of the forest but he knew he could rely on them. They were all he needed. With these he could be stronger, faster and better able to protect those he loved.

There was a rock. A dull small piece of black cinder that nobody noticed until the sun glinted in just the right way to catch the light of the rocks anthracite. It happened many times but it would take a small person, walking slowly and deliberately head down to notice how beautiful the rock really was. It was a case of being the right person, in the right place at the most opportune time for the magic to work.

It was on this special, magical, New Year's Day that moment arrived. The boy, thinking of nothing in particular but carrying the thoughts of all his seven year existence on his

mind, noticed the glitter and peculiarity of the rock and without conscious thought picked it up and shared the moment of connection with his grandmother, "Look at my rock. It is my rock and it is special."

Lighter on his feet, he used the small hill to quickly catch up with his family. He was a boy but a Knight of the forest realm and Lord of the pathways.

They continued on facing dangerous swamps, scrambling along treacherous paths and having to cross bridges and walk narrow branches to pass from one hidden path to the other. Sometimes it was nice to chat and share ideas and feelings as they walked. Other times it was better to be quiet and listen to the spirit of the forest and the voices of natural things. In contrast, being content and overwhelmed with the huge expanse and depth of feeling, it was a release to sing and shout aloud even if they were made-up on the spot nonsense songs. The repetition seemed important, rather like casting out a line into the deep waters of the place so to be anchored or to catch hold of time and space.

All this time the boy, and his stick and his rock were a trio of comrades. Ready to take on the world, fight the doubts and uncertainties and learn to be brave as well as good and kind.

Then, there was the rule. The rule was strong and right, made for the protection of all. Although the boy heard the rule he did not want to listen with understanding. The rule became stronger and firmer, "NOTHING SHOULD BE TAKEN FROM THIS PLACE. DO NOT TAKE STICKS, PLANTS, DIRT AND ESPECIALLY ROCKS. PLEASE LEAVE FOR EVERYONE TO ENJOY. BY ORDER OF THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE!!

Actually, it didn't say that last bit, but the boy felt as if it did. He did not like the rule, and what he did not like, he made big in his mind, so that he could try to stand up against it. It became a power struggle, boy against the rule and those who made the rule. He did not want to leave the stick. But most of all, he did not want to leave his rock. It was his special rock. It was his companion and his trophy. The thought of leaving it, abandoned on the pathway was too much to bear. He did not cry, he would not give them that made the rule that power over him, but he felt weighted down by loss and confusion.

"This is not good, or right, or fair!" he shouted.

He walked on because he had to do so. Grandmother walked quietly beside him and when she thought it was time, she squeezed his shoulder, or rubbed his back, or gently whispered, "I love you". His family walked with him, and slowly and surely, the rule did not seem as big any more. The boy used all of his seven years of doing right, of being generous and kind, and gathered all of his wisdom into one huge warm feeling in his heart and knew it was okay.



The rock glistens in the sunshine.

There is a rock that glistens and shines in the sunshine. It lies on the pathway to the forest of adventure and stories,

for all to find and carry just for a time, and then leave behind until you should come and find it. When you do, listen to the story of the seven year old boy, who walked and talked and sang songs but most of all learned to be brave and follow the rule.