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How to Disappear

by Miriam Silver

“Everyone’s too busy, won’t even notice,” William mumbled as he determinedly made his way across the fields clutching Jumble’s lead, adding dejectedly to no one in particular, “no one appreciates me, only you” he said as he patted his four legged friend, “not my fault, was only helping.”

His mind made up, he was going to run away, disappear, get away from school reports, broken window, washing, bedtimes, grown ups and now the goodies from the larder which he’d stuffed into his pockets.

Cheered up at the thought of food he sat down on a fallen tree trunk and enjoyed the contents of his pocket sharing a crust with his only friend, then carried on until he found a bridge over the stream.

Feeling satisfied as he played Poo sticks, he began to plan a future which included finding an island on which he could live, fish for food, swim all day, then patted his pocket, yes, his knife was still there, that’ll be useful.

“Not Ginger’s turn yet,” he remembered.

Striding on purposefully, taking care to aim at the distant horizon, a stone in his sandal caused him to stop, and while he sat down to take it out he realised he felt a hungry, that bit of food he’d had back there hadn’t amounted to much, not nearly enough for an intrepid explorer.

“Now for some fishing, need a rod,” he told Jumble, trying not to think of the one confiscated by his father. Nothing suitable in the sheep cropped field he continued walking, remembering his aims, crossed the next rough field into the woods, out again into another, passing some sheep who ignored him while nibbling the grass making a hungry William envious.

Bravely, he carried on thinking about all those explorers who went for days in the desert, they didn't give up just because they needed a drink. Reaching another stream, Jumble went straight in, gone, over the other side, wouldn't listen to his master's imploring shouts of, "come back, Jumble, come back, here, good boy, good boy!"

All of which fell on deaf ears making William run alongside hoping he'd find a way over. After a fruitless search, he waded in, climbed the opposite bank where he found his pet nibbling at something he'd found to eat and was comfortably resting in the sun.

"All right for you" he said to his dog, "gotta go on cos I'm an explore n' left home, don't know where we are, I'm hungry and wet, come on."

There was nothing for it, dripping, William had to struggle on over yet another field in search of that island until sheer exhaustion made him stop, realising how fraught disappearing was. So tying Jumble to a tree he sat down to have a think, while blaming his father, that rod, could have...

"Are you ok?" a kindly voice was addressing him, a prone, wet boy who jumped up, awake now.

"Yea, I'm just resting, on my way..." he was interrupted by a man holding fishing gear looking down at him in a concerned way.

"Well, shouldn't you be at home or at school or something?" he asked, noting that in spite of looking wet and a bit bedraggled the boy was well, Bonny!

That was all our hero needed, a sympathetic ear and out it poured.

"Nah! I'm disappearing, at least I was, cos' no one wants me, report awful, no pocket money, cos', well wasn't my fault, an' I want to be an explorer an' Jumble here made me get wet an' well, I got tired an' I must have fell asleep I sp'ose..." he trailed off.

The man looked sympathetic and explained he understood, he came fishing just to 'get away' from things and offered to show him how to try and maybe catch something while he dried out.

However, no luck, they'd gone to bed!

"Another time maybe, come on I think I can get you home, don't worry, I won't say a word, perhaps when your fishing skills improve exploring might be easier.

"S'pose, Anyway gotta' give Ginger the knife, his turn."