

“Tracks in the Snow”

By: Hopson Kounavis, age 9

Harrison woke at 7:28 AM to find Gertrude lying next to him in bed. “Hello, Gertrude.” He said through a yawn.

“Hi.” said Gertrude sleepily.

Harrison looked out the window and saw *snow* covered trees. “Hm?” he grumbled, as he pulled back the covers and walked over to the window. His jaw hit the floor.

“What is it?” asked Gertrude. She jumped out of bed and walked over to the window as well. Then her jaw hit the floor too. Overnight they had gotten *over two feet of snow!!!!!!*

They ran downstairs as fast as they could. Just then their two dogs, Louisiana and Popcorn, jumped up and started barking. Their parents walked out of their room.

“Whoa, whoa, whoa, there... what’s the excitement about?” Their parents’ names were Matilda and Frank Kounank. Their mom, Matilda, was always telling Harrison and Gertrude that Frank’s football friends always called him FK instead of Frank because they thought it sounded “groovy”.

“Can we go outside?” Harrison and Gertrude asked at once.

“Yes, yes, I suppose. But first you need to make your beds and brush your teeth. And please bring Popcorn with you,” said their mother.

After they had done both of those things, they pulled on snow clothes and leashed up Popcorn. Louisiana was an older dog so they had to get a path cleared before he could come out. Popcorn was just one year old and full of energy. Harrison took a step out the side door, and his leg fell through 29 inches of snow! Popcorn was immediately coated with the white powder.

When Gertrude got out, Harrison was already halfway to the woods next to their house.

“Come on! This is crazy,” yelled Harrison to Gertrude. When Gertrude finally got to Harrison, he was staring at something in the snow and Popcorn was sniffing the air. “Oh my gosh,” he muttered under his breath. Popcorn gave out one short deep bark. There was a line of unusual tracks leading into the woods.

“Dad, we’re going into the woods,” Harrison yelled to their father, who was unsuccessfully attempting to shovel out the driveway.

“Sounds good!” their father yelled back.

“Whaaaaat?” said Gertrude in disbelief.

“We’re following them, aren’t we?” Harrison asked Gertrude. Popcorn barked again. Gertrude reluctantly followed him down into the woods where the tracks continued, while murmuring about brothers being so adventurous and ambitious. After about five minutes of walking they came upon the small creek that Harrison had built a bridge across a few months ago. Although Popcorn bounded right across, as Harrison stepped on the bridge, he heard a snap coming from underneath him.

“Uh oh!!” he yelled to Gertrude. He saw the wood snap under the load of snow on top of the bridge. Though he managed to pull Gertrude across, the bridge broke into two pieces and fell in the water and floated away.

“Everyone all right? Looks like we’ll be jumping the way back,” said Harrison.

“It was all that snow. It just took us to finish it off.” Popcorn pulled on the leash.

“Well then, what are we waiting for?” asked Gertrude.

“Let’s go!” jumped in Harrison. They began to hike west down the creek.

“The tracks keep going here!” yelled Harrison. “They look like some type of paw print.”

They continued heading west for about half a mile when they heard something. It was getting darker, and it was harder to make out where the noise was coming from. Popcorn barked.

“Huh, that’s weird. Never heard that before.” muttered Harrison. They continued following the prints. All of a sudden, they came upon a small hill. “Well, I guess we’ll go up.” Harrison said to Gertrude through the now pitch-black night. They began to hike up the hill. They heard something rustling at the top and Popcorn yipped. “That’s weird,” grunted Harrison. Harrison reached the top first.

Gertrude saw his jaw drop and heard popcorn whimper. When she caught up to them, she began to scream at what she saw. Harrison pulled her down behind a large rock and told her to be quiet. “Don’t move! We need to get out of here without them seeing us,” he whispered. Right there in front of them was a wolf den - and ten huge, vicious-looking wolves. Gertrude spotted a baby wolf cub huddled deep in the den, at the very same moment that its mother spotted Gertrude. “RUN!” yelled Harrison.

They began to slide down the hill, propelled by Popcorn’s pulling. When they reached the bottom, they began to run. “There’s a wolf chasing us!” gasped Harrison. It looked like the alpha of the pack. It was a huge wolf. It was three feet tall and almost 5 feet long with dark gray fur. Popcorn ran even faster. When they reached the bridge, the wolf skidded to a stop and Harrison, Gertrude, and Popcorn jumped across the creek and ran to the top of the trail.

“*That* was close.” Harrison gasped. Popcorn was panting like crazy. Gertrude was doing about the same as Popcorn. They thought they were safe until they looked up toward their house... they saw a pair of glowing eyes under the porch. And then the figure moved under the porch light. It was a wolf! It was dark black with gray spots. “How...?” Harrison gasped. Then two

more wolves stepped under the porch light! Then it hit them; the wolves were circling the house!

“They must have gotten here first somehow!” Gertrude croaked.

“There must be at least 20 of them!” Harrison said in amazement. They snuck up toward the house. All of a sudden Popcorn gave a pull and yanked them directly into sight of the wolves. The black and grey wolf looked at them. “Well this can’t be good,” muttered Harrison. Popcorn laid down and rolled over on his back. Just then a huge, bulky, mysterious figure whizzed by. The other wolves followed. “What is that?” gasped Harrison. Then the figure stopped. The other wolves walked around him in a circle. “It’s the same wolf that was chasing us in the woods!” exclaimed Harrison. The wolf let out a long howl, as if to say, “We know where you live,” and then slowly led his pack back into the forest. Harrison, Gertrude, and Popcorn darted into the house as quickly as their feet would take them.

“Where have you two been?!” their mom questioned as they collapsed on the kitchen floor. “We were starting to get worried.”

“Mom, you’re not going to believe what happened...” started Gertrude.

“Oh boy, sounds like we’re going to need some hot chocolate for this story...” said their mom.

“We could probably use brownies, too...” added Harrison. “I’m exhausted and starving.”

“Sounds like a plan,” said their mom. “Why don’t you two go get into your pajamas and I’ll get the treats ready for your adventure story.”

Gertrude and Harrison exchanged a knowing glance and ran upstairs to change. This would definitely be a day they never forgot. They weren’t sure if they would ever venture back out into the forest behind their house, but they knew that if they did, they wouldn’t be following any mysterious howls or

prints, and they'd probably leave Popcorn at home. Harrison had always wanted to see a wolf in the wild, but after today, he decided that some adventures are just better left to the imagination. He thought that maybe, just this once, his sister was right...maybe brothers are too ambitious and adventurous.

THE END