

In the Name of Love

Sarah, the rabbit, who founded and developed Sarah's Place - a shelter for the poor - was getting old.

"When the tree branches are all bare again in the cold winter wind," Sarah thought to herself, "I may not be alive. I feel so old and tired now. I must make sure that the shelter is taken care of then."

In the blooming spring mornings that followed, Sarah was seen walking around the shelter, contemplating. She then sent out word for her old friend Luke, the deer, to come visit her as soon as he could.

When the summer heat hovered around the forest like an invisible dense and humid cloud, Luke arrived to visit his friend Sarah.

"Luke, you are my oldest and dearest friend, you must help me!" Sarah said immediately upon Luke's arrival. She then went on to explain how the shelter needed "an able hand" to run smoothly, how everything needed to be taken care of when she was gone and how she would not be able to rest in peace if the shelter fell apart and the poor became homeless again....

Luke was silent after Sarah stopped speaking. He then said gently, "Sarah, you know that I am a nomadic creature. I do not do well staying in one place. I don't think that I would be the right one to take care of the shelter. But I have traveled to distant lands and waters and met different creatures, and once I ran into this little duck named Hope—"

Frowning, Sarah cut Luke off and almost spat out her words, "Luke, remember years ago when we both secretly believed that we were 'readier' for the mighty king's arrival than the other? And the key to settling that argument was to accept the other as who he/she was? Well, I think we both did that over the years. But now I need your help. If you are really ready to be kindhearted to the poor, then the only way for you to prove it is to help me yourself, and not to get some strange duck to come over and ruin the place. Luke, if you love me, you will do it for me. And by doing it, you will be fulfilled. Remember, it is not just for me, it is also for yourself!"

At that moment, Luke felt that he was in a terrible bind. He knew that he was not a creature who would be content settling in Sarah's Place, running the shelter. But he also knew that in the rabbit's mind, if he did not do it, it would be the proof that he did not love her. Or worse yet, Sarah would think that Luke was unkind and selfish.

After much inner debate, Luke decided that he would try to appeal to Sarah's empathic side, "Sarah, if I told you that the only way you could prove to me that you love me and that you were a good person would be for you to go travel with me and help resolve conflicts among beasts and fowls along the way, would you do it?"

It was then Sarah's turn to be pensive. She thought for a while and then replied, "Sure, if it were the case that you were the one dying and it was crucial that I helped you that way, then I would. But we are talking about the shelter and helping me here. You are not dying!"

Luke was speechless. He did not know what else he could do to make Sarah aware that it was not because he did not love her or that he did not want to help the poor, it was just that running the shelter did not fit his nature.

"There is no way to convince her now," the deer thought sadly to himself, "I might as well do what she wants, because otherwise she would think that I do not love her. And I certainly do not want that to be the thought she carries with her to death."

Throughout the summer and the fall, Luke learned everything that there was to know about the shelter. Beasts and fowls loved him because he had so many interesting stories to tell them, all gathered throughout his years of traveling experience. Sarah was very happy that her friend finally saw the "light" and did the "right" thing.

As expected, when the first chilly wind blew, accompanied by a heavy snowstorm, the rabbit closed her eyes, peacefully.

Another few years went by. Luke became more and more restless at the shelter, his heart yearned for new adventures and his body suffered because it had not encountered new and strange land for a very long time. But every time the thought of leaving the shelter came to Luke's mind, he heard Sarah's loud and clear words, "If you love me...." Then he felt bond to the shelter....