***Palace of Thieves***

“When I was a little raccoon I heard stories from our Chief Raccoon. Now, little ones, I am here to teach you about the Palace of Thieves.” Chief Joan Raccoon stated around the campfire on the forest floor to the little Raccoons ages varying from one to ten. The fire light flickered over every one of the raccoons. They listened with their eyes wide taking in every word.

“The Palace of Thief’s is located somewhere over the Big Mountain peak.” Chief Joan pointed to the right side, over the trees to the looming, blue mountain all the raccoons knew as Big Mountain. “The palace was said to be shared by human and raccoons alike. It was covered in straw and hay and had garbage cans full of food every day. Everyone agreed to disagree and…” Chief Joan Raccoon said before being interrupted by one of the two year old raccoons.

“What does agree to disagree mean?” a little raccoon called Kate Raccoon asked with stars in her round eyes.

“I was just getting to that Kate; also it is not polite to interrupt fellow raccoons.” Chief Raccoon said to the over exited Kate. “Agree to disagree means they didn’t always agree, but they didn’t make a big deal out of the fact they didn’t.”  
 “Oh, OK, I understand now, thank you Chief Joan Raccoon.”  
 “Your very welcome, and to continue the story. The palace was the size of the trees and was covered in bright colors of the rainbow. Every year the Raccoon village sent a couple up the mountain to find The Palace of Thieves.” Joan continued.

All the raccoon remembered this because some of their grandparents and parents went looking for the palace. They were believed to be there because they never came back to the Raccoon Village. Everyone was sad when they left but they moved on.

“The palace is a place where we all want to go and someday we all will. Now it is time for bed and mid-night snacks.” Chief Joan Raccoon concluded.

Bobby woke with a jolt. He had had this dream before and it was more like a memory then a dream. He had talked to the town dream teller and he left Bobby more confused than ever. Bobby Raccoon was around four years old now along with his classmates Kate and Billy Raccoon. All the raccoons had the same last name, Raccoon, if they were related or not.

Bobby crawled out of his bed of pine needles and walked over to the dining hall. The dining hall consisted of tables of tree stumps and fridges of hollow logs. Bobby walked over to his family’s hollow log and reached inside. His parents must have been off the work, and his younger sister, Helen, was at daycare. As he reached in the log he found that there was no food in it. He stuck his eye into one of the holes in the log and didn’t see a single morsel of food.

Bobby, because he was confused, just assumed that the food supplier forgot to scavenge the forest for food. So, he walked over to the hut in which Chief Joan Raccoon lived. He talked to the guard and gave him the secret password “cupcakes”. The guard let him in and Chief Joan greeted him with a smile.

“Hello, little Bobby what can I do for you today.” She asked Bobby with a caring disposition.

“I was wondering if the food scavenger went out today because I have no food in my log.” He wondered out loud.

“No, he did go out today and he didn’t find anything.” She said sadly to the young raccoon. “I’ll tell you more during the morning meeting. See you there.” She walked out of the room and Bobby went to get the best seat on a stump in the meeting square.

“Hello everyone, I am sorry to be late.” Chief Joan stated even though she was never late. As usual she got to the point very fast. “I believe you have all noticed there was little or no food in your logs today” A murmur went through the crowd in agreement. “The food scavenger went out this morning and didn’t find any food in the forest at all. I cannot have a village that is hungry so we are going to the Palace of Thieves to find some food.”

The crowd sat in dumbfounded silence. No one went looking for the palace unless told to and the crowd knew no one came back. “I know you are all concerned, but I don’t want any complains. So, go to your homes and pack your belongs and your family. We are all leaving in an hour. Chief Joan left with the entire crowd just sitting there.

Bobby’s family was standing towards the front of the crowd holding hands and ready to go. They all started the long trek to the top of Big Mountain. They walked, and walked, and walked all day and all night. Their stomachs complained and everyone started crying.

On the second day, fellow raccoons were becoming angry. “I know who did all this to us. It was Bobby Raccoon. He is the reason we had to leave.” An old town grump stated. All the raccoons knew it wasn’t Bobby’s fault but they wanted to blame someone.

“Yeah get him!” A big bully in Bobby’s class, Billy Raccoon stated. All the raccoons pushed Bobby against a tree and tied his hands there. Everyone agreed whenever anything went wrong it became usual to attribute it to Bobby.

The other raccoons left and walked away. A while later, Kate Raccoon walked up to Bobby. Without saying a word she untied his hands and left.

No one knew if the raccoons ever reached this Palace of Thieves, the utopia they had dreamed of. All we know is Bobby, the scapegoat, didn’t find this palace and he never saw his family, friends, or enemies again.

THE END