

The Dark Forest Fable



The Dark Forest Fable

Read the following story on these two pages, then reflect on the discussion questions afterwards:

Gather round and settle down as I transport you back to a time when things were simpler. Watch all of those things around you fizzle away, as you find yourself in a small, peaceful village.

You share this village with a dozen or so other families. You all work together to provide for each other. One family provides crops, another provides cows and chickens, another makes clothing.

A few metres away is a beautiful, clear stream that provides everyone with drinking water. Everything you need to survive and live happily is in this village. And that is why no one has ever felt the need to venture into the forest that surrounds you.

That forest is so dense with trees that it is known as “The Dark Forest”. Nothing good happens in The Dark Forest, and nothing good comes from it.

When you were small, a little boy you grew up with named Try one day ventured into the forest out of curiosity. He never returned. The whole village mourned Try’s loss for months.

Every so often, bandits come from the forest to steal from the village. Sometimes the villagers fought them off, other times some of the villagers were killed by them.

When you grew up, you would always hear stories from the elders about the bad things that happened to people who went into The Dark Forest. They would be eaten by dragons, or swallowed by trees or carried away by giant eagles.

(continued on the next page)

The Dark Forest Fable

Every few months, the whole village would celebrate a birthday by singing songs about how the village has allowed them to live for another year. Every night before going to bed you and your family would express your gratitude to the village for allowing you to survive and live happily for another day, and pray for its protection for the next day.

You had a happy and safe life in this simple, peaceful village.

That is until one day a strange man stepped out of The Dark Forest with a sack of delicious looking fruits. The whole village gathered around to hear what the man had to say.

“My name is Try. Thirty years ago, I left this village as a small boy.”

The villagers let out a collective gasp. Try’s elderly parents stepped forth, with tears streaming from their eyes. “Is it really you?”

“It is I,” said Try. “I bring with me gifts, and a message to you all that there is a big, wide world out there, with so much more to offer you. Please accept these fruits, in exchange for letting me share with you tales of the wonders the world has to offer.”



The Dark Forest Fable

How could Try persuade the villagers to go with him into The Dark Forest?



Reflections

Whose minds do you need to change in your work or life?

And for these people, what is their “Village” and what is their “Dark Forest”?



