

To Fly Like a Hawk

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An encounter in the forest inspired by the first picture.

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“David, is that you? Are you back?” she asked. There was no answer. It was a Red-tailed Hawk that had landed on a branch above. She had heard his wings flutter. She stared up now as she raised her arm, opened her palm, managed a smile and waved. A small celebration of being alive. “Are you after the berries on those brambles, Mr. Hawk?” she asked. Then she said “No, probably not. You’re a meat eater. Sorry if I insulted you.” The Hawk cocked his head to one side and watched her. She felt the gentle breeze caress her wrist. Many thoughts raced through her mind. Happy ones about the day she met David, their wedding day, the birth of their first child, and how they had decided to “get away from it all” on this hiking trip. And sad memories about her father’s death. “I miss you so much,” she thought. “I miss you every day, Dad. You loved the woods so.” The Hawk continued to watch her. She looked up and imagined seeing herself from his perspective, looking down twenty feet from the branch above. “It must be wonderful to fly, Mr. Hawk,” she said. “To just soar above it all, and swoop down to get a closer look whenever you want to!” The Hawk cocked his head to the other side and continued staring at her. “Why are you staring at me?” she asked. “Surely you have seen people in this forest before.” She raised up her other arm, as if trying to reach for the sky. “David,” she called out. “Are you here? Are you back yet?” Again there was no answer. She had so looked forward to this trip! Just she and the love of her life on a romantic getaway! No kids, no dog, no television, no traffic, no other people! Just the two of them in the wilderness. She closed her eyes and felt the sun on her outstretched arms. She remembered the beautiful love-making in the tent with David. She kept her arms extended upward and wiggled her fingers and toes as she recalled his gentle touch. When she opened her eyes the Hawk was still staring. Their eyes locked. “Would you teach me how to fly, Mr. Hawk?” she asked. “Would you teach me how to spread my wings and disappear into that fluffy cloud I see?” And the Hawk flew down and landed beside her. He was about four feet away. She turned her head and saw his eyes peering into hers. “I know why you’re staring at me!” she said. “You’re not used to seeing people lying on their backs with their arms in the air! You’re used to seeing them standing and walking. If I were a Hawk I would look strange to me, too.” She laughed. And then her eyes turned cold. And her arms collapsed to the ground. “Susan! Susan!” a voice shouted, “It’s David. I’m back! Susan!” David stepped out from behind some trees accompanied by three other men. “Susan!” he shouted. He rushed to her side. But Susan was sitting on the branch now next to the

Hawk. She looked down and saw everyone staring at her still body. She heard one man say something about four days being too long to survive. She saw David crying. "Don't cry, David," she said. "Don't cry. I'll see you again. I'll see you all again. Just kiss the children for me." And then she was flying alongside Mr. Hawk. Towards the cloud she had been staring at. "Take me to my father, Mr. Hawk?" she asked. "Please?" The Hawk turned and looked at her. She knew that soon she would feel her father's embrace. ©2013 All rights reserved.