

Timmy's Hidden Forest

By Claire

All Timmy saw that morning was a flashing object whisk past his face, and he barely had enough time to react when Cheddar, the cat landed on his face. Groaning, Timmy seized the yowling cat and tossed it off his bed, where it landed on the floor and took cover under a large bag sitting in the corner. Sighing, Timmy looked around and spotted a round piece of shining gold tied to a loopy red ribbon. He leaned over to the edge of the bed and looked under it. A pair of glowing eyes looked back. "How many times do I have to tell you to stop bringing home junk?" Timmy scolded the cat. Cheddar meowed as if offended, and Timmy swung back up. He picked up the round piece of gold and looked at it closely. It had a tree engraved onto it. Somehow this tree felt soothing to Timmy. He looked at it for a long time. Did Cheddar just get tangled in some piece of gold by accident, or was this meant to happen?

When Timmy got downstairs, a strong smell drifted from the kitchen into the hallway. Locating the smell of frying pancakes, he walked into the dining room. Timmy's mother came swinging into the dining room, a frying pan in hand. Timmy smiled. It was always fun to watch his mother do stunts with food. With a flick, Timmy's mother flung a pancake into the air and thwacked it with a spatula so it flew towards Timmy and slid onto his plate. Timmy clapped and reached for the syrup. His mother loved to do little tricks with things, especially food. After he finished his breakfast, Timmy headed out to play with his friend, Charles. He stashed the mysterious golden pendant in his pocket as he headed out the door. When no one answered the door, Timmy walked down the street to the local park. As he walked down the street, he noticed a large rock by the street. The rock hadn't been there before, and he wondered who had put it there. Timmy moved closer to the rock and noticed that there was a shallow circle indent marked into the stone. There was something familiar about it. Suddenly he remembered. Timmy put his hand in the pocket on the side of his jeans and

pulled out the pendant. He slid the small, shining plate into the carved circle on the rock. It was a perfect fit. Suddenly, Timmy heard a low rumble beside him. He looked up and cried in surprise at what he saw.

The wall of tall bushes beside him had parted to reveal a narrow, long dirt path leading into a forest filled with sunshine. Frowning, Timmy turned around. The sky was dim and filled with clouds. The sun could not be seen. Nevertheless, sunlight filled the garden. Timmy considered for a moment, then he walked into the garden. As if on cue, the wall of bushes rumbled and closed behind him. Timmy looked around the forest. There was a narrow dirt path leading further into the forest. The trees were tightly packed together, but a considerable amount of sunshine still leaked through the cracks of the leaves. Timmy walked along the dirt path, looking around him. There were bunnies, sparrows, and squirrels. They all looked at him curiously as if they had never seen a human before. Within five minutes, there were a dozen small animals crowded at Timmy's feet. Timmy reached down and scooped up a tiny squirrel with a long, bushy tail. It blinked at him and hopped up onto his shoulder. Then the squirrel squeaked and the rest of the animals started walking along the path deeper into the forest, as if guiding him. They walked along the path until they reached a clearing. As the clearing came into view Timmy saw something horrible. He gasped.

In the clearing there was a garden that has been destroyed. The garden that was once filled with vibrantly colored flowers now has wrinkled, dead flowers on flattened stems. Timmy felt very sad for the flowers and the animals, then he had an idea.

Once Timmy got home with the pendant he dashed into his room with a quick hello to his mother. After taking the money out of his piggy bank and scrounging around the room for small coins, Timmy counted his money and came up with a total of ten dollars. He went to the local convenience store and bought dozens of packets of different flower seeds. The next morning Timmy arrived at the garden with the seeds, a shovel, five large buckets of water in a small wagon, and a tiny watering can. After he arrived at the garden, Timmy immediately began to work. It was always the same

procedure. Dig, plant, cover, water. Stopping once in a while to stand up and stretch, Timmy worked on the garden for three hours straight. At last, every seed was planted and watered. Timmy was so happy that he declared a celebration with all the animals in the forest. In the afternoon, he brought nuts for the squirrels, carrots for the rabbits, and sunflower seeds for the sparrows. They had a great time. From that day on, Timmy visited his garden in the middle of the forest every day to water the flowers. After a month, the flowers finally bloom and the garden is full of colors again. Timmy threw a party beside the garden and danced until it was time for Timmy to return home. It was going to be the first day of school tomorrow, he thought. But he knew that whenever he needed a break from the world, he could always go into his hidden forest.