

The Falcon Queen

This is Marilyn. She has short, curly brown hair and an adventurous grin. Marilyn's heart is venturesome, but she feels trapped as an ordinary girl in an ordinary house with an ordinary life. *Boring*, she thought. *I could live on a giant mountain with a high peak, or in a small shack in the wild savannah! But instead I'm in this old house that I just moved into.*

Marilyn pulled her heavy suitcase up the steep steps of her new home. She could hear the moving truck driving away, and her parents unpacking in the kitchen. When she got to her new room, Marilyn opened her bag and began to put things away. Then she pulled out a pretty dress and tugged open the door to her closet. That's when she saw a normal-looking button on the wall in front of her.

I really wish I was in a place with adventure, she thought. Marilyn sighed and pressed the button, ready for a door to open or a ladder to appear. But then, much to her surprise, colorful ribbons of blue, pink, and white swirled around her lifting her into the air. Her heart thumped with excitement and she closed her eyes.

When Marilyn opened them again, she was in a strange, unfamiliar land. *A grove*, she thought. *No, a forest.* That's when she realized that there was something peculiar about

this place. The trees were white from tall top to underground bottom. Then she looked all around her. The black, rushing river looked drab, and the birds were gray and silent.

There's no color! It looks like a fantasy! Am I the hero? No, I can't be, she thought.

Then she heard a piercing "CAW!" *Is that the bad guy?* she wondered. Marilyn started to run frantically away from the sound. She listened for a minute to make sure she was alone, and then she slowed to a steady walk. Just then, a tiny, white unicorn stepped out of the tall grass.

"Why-why-why are you *colorful?*" he asked in awe.

"You can *talk?*" asked Marilyn. The unicorn relaxed a little.

"I can talk because this is a magical forest," he said. "Only the creatures of this forest can enter as they please. The only way for others to enter is to press the ancient button and wish they were here."

"What is your name?" asked Marilyn curiously.

"I'm Frank," said Frank.

"I'm Marilyn," she answered.

“Before you leave,” called Frank, “You need to know about the dark prophecy.” Marilyn’s skin prickled as she waited for him to continue.

“The prophecy says that a rainbow child will arrive in the forest. If she loses her battle to the Falcon Queen, she will surrender her old life forever,” said Frank. “Be very, very careful.”

Marilyn’s heart stopped. *I can’t be this rainbow child... can I?* she thought, looking down at her outfit that was brightly colored against the gray and black of the forest. “I will be careful,” she called back to Frank as she started to run. Then she heard a bird screech horribly, as she dodged every thick tree and black bush.

Her heart raced wildly. The giant bird flew down to the ground at top speed, claws outstretched. It just barely missed by a foot. Then it landed with a thud right in front of Marilyn. Marilyn stared at with shock. Its claws were covered with black rings and it wore a brilliant crown shining with jewels.

Is that the Falcon Queen? she wondered. Frightened, Marilyn tripped and fell into a deep river. She had no idea how to swim! The falcon grabbed her and then flew southeast toward a black castle. The castle was made of intertwining trees. The door was in the air! In fact, the whole castle was floating! The Falcon Queen flew up to the castle. *This must be the Falcon Queen’s castle!* Marilyn thought.

The falcon swooped into a room with a gray cage and shoved Marilyn in. Marilyn put her head down and cried. A tear fell to the ground and the earth shook.

Suddenly four little mice wearing tuxedos entered the room. The first was holding a tiny cane and wearing a white crown. "Marilyn," the second mouse said in a calming voice.

"Who are you?" Marilyn asked.

"I am the Mouse King," the first mouse said. "I have come to save you. Frank told me everything."

Just then, the Falcon Queen stepped into the room, holding a glowing orb. The third mouse whispered to Marilyn, "The Falcon Queen drained all the forest's color. If she has all the color, she'll be unstoppable!"

"What does that have to do with *me*? I'm just an ordinary girl!" Marilyn said in confusion.

Across the room, the Falcon Queen was sharpening her talons on the orb.

"You are special, Marilyn! You are the rainbow child! You are the only one who can defeat the Falcon Queen," peeped the fourth mouse. "She is going to drain your color and your power with the orb!"

The Falcon Queen snarled. Marilyn sprang to her feet. *Maybe if I can break the orb, all the color will come back!* she thought. She looked at the ground and found a stick that had fallen from the treetop ceiling. The falcon took a step forward. Her talons scraped against the wood floor.

Marilyn's chest thumped. She took a deep breath. She threw the stick right in front of the falcon. The Falcon Queen fell and she dropped the orb. It clattered on the ground and shattered. The Falcon Queen howled, as colors from the orb swirled and then exploded.

Marilyn gasped. The colors stained the sky like paint, dripping slowly before rushing like a river into the forest below. The four little mice straightened their sky-blue bowties. The Mouse King reached into his pocket and pulled out a button. "Here, take this button. When you press it, you will be home."

"Thank you for all that you did," said the mice. "You saved us!"

Marilyn pressed the red button and in ribbons of blue, pink, and white, she was back home. *I guess this new house isn't too bad after all,* she thought.

THE END