

# *The Lost Crown of Colonnade*

**Book I of The Journeys to Colonnade**

**By Kenneth G. Winters**

**“If there’s life on other planets,  
then I’m sure that He must know.  
And He’s been there once already,  
and He’s died to save their souls.”**

**“UFO” music and lyrics by Larry Norman  
(from the Album “In Another Land”-1975)**

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## CHAPTER 1

### *A Strange Entrance*



**D**avey Johnsen sprawled out on his luxurious leather recliner in the mini-mansion he called home. He had spent the afternoon playing game after game on his giant screen computer HDTV entertainment center. Looking at the remote control, he noticed something new.

*I don't remember a purple button. I wonder what that does?*

So, like many of us would do, he pushed it to find out. Before he had time to think more about it, he realized there wasn't any show or game on the TV. Rather, for a moment, he was on screen. He could see and feel himself being drawn into the giant screen. He felt goose

bumps all over his body as he traveled briefly into the TV. He was surrounded by air charged with static electricity. All the hair on his body stuck straight up from those goose bumps. He could see little blue bolts of electricity attached to each hair.

A moment later the screen wasn't even there! He couldn't see it, his mom's antique and very valuable Tiffany lamp, or the plush leather couch and chairs.

"I must be losing my mind!" Davey screamed. No one else heard. Then he passed out.

He woke up suddenly, feeling cold water dripping onto his nose. Looking straight up, he opened his eyes just in time to watch another drop fall from a pointed formation. It was a bullseye, right in his right eye.

Wiping the water out of his eye, he glanced at his watch. Two hours of his life unaccounted for, swallowed up in his faded consciousness. The air was cool, too cool to be his living room. Davey was all alone in a very dark place.

*How in the world did I get here?* His heart pounded with excitement and fear. His chest rose and fell as he fought to catch his breath. He'd never had a panic attack, although his mom had described them. He was close to having one now.

Then he thought, *OK, David Johnsen, just calm down, mellow out. I must be dreaming!* But this was much more real than all of his fantasy adventures.

Davey had developed quite an imagination. After turning seven he'd been unable to run or play many sports. For the past seven and a half years he was primarily limited to indoor activities. Since his parents were quite rich, he had a lot of choices. His mom and dad weren't billionaire rich like Bill Gates or Donald Trump. They were merely the multi-millionaire kind of rich. That meant he could choose from an amazing variety of indoor fun.

Davey's leather chair was a special one. At the push of a button it helped him to stand up. Like his walker, the chair was used mostly by senior citizens with various physical problems. Surrounding the

chair in his own giant playroom was every electronic toy and entertainment system that you can imagine.

What he didn't have was a mom and dad who were really interested in their physically-challenged fourteen-year-old son. They were too busy making money and impressing other rich and powerful people to give him the attention and love he needed.

In his fantasies Davey would become a great baseball player hitting towering home runs with two out in the bottom of the ninth inning. On other days he would read about people like Robin Hood, King Arthur, Sir Lancelot and all that was kingly and knightly and noble. More often than not he became the main character of the story. He killed the dragon, robbed from the rich to give to the poor and defeated the wicked sheriff. Or, as he read a science fiction story, he would be featured as the hero defeating a villain with a scaly body, huge fangs, and four or five arms with multiple claws. Usually its body, mouth and nose were dripping some kind of disgusting goop of various nauseating colors.

Another drop of water dripped on his face from the ceiling (or whatever you call the top of a cavern). Looking up he noticed a cone-shaped mineral formation was the source of the drops of water. There were many of them, dripping water everywhere. You may know that these are called “stalagtites.” Below each stalagtite, there was a matching cone forming on the floor. These are called “stalagmites.” One of those stalagmites was centered very uncomfortably behind his neck. Fortunately it was one of the small ones. He sat up and took a closer look at the surroundings. His eyes were adjusting to the light and he could make out more of the cavern.

He could see only darkness to his right. The source of the light came from the smaller tunnel to his left. The light was faint but definitely there. Looking that way he could see everything more clearly.

*Well, I guess I'll try crawling in that direction.* Without his walker and braces that was all he could manage at home. They had not made the journey with him. As he started out he gradually noticed that he had more strength than he could remember having in his legs, in his arms, in his entire body.

After crawling a while, he thought, *Wow, I feel so different. I think I'll try standing up.* He did. "OOWWW!" he yelled as his head hit the roof of the cave. He felt the top of his head and laughed at himself for standing up straight and tall in a place that wasn't tall enough. The height inside the cavern varied greatly.

Next time, he stood up more carefully, bending some at the waist. *Well, what do you know about that?* he thought. *I may just try and take a few steps.* And he did. Only he didn't take just a few steps. He walked slowly, carefully. Each moment he expected his legs to weaken and that he would take a hard fall on his face or on his butt.

Instead, for the first time in over seven years, he walked without crutches, a walker or braces. He did not fall. He found himself gaining confidence in his legs that had been so unreliable. There was energy within him that he hadn't felt in years. He felt better than ever before.

*I can, I can really walk. What a great dream this is! I don't ever want to wake up!* With that, he pinched himself, but he didn't wake



up. As you have probably figured out, he wasn't asleep. Davey still wasn't sure.

He walked steadily for at least ten minutes, ducking down or standing up depending on the height of the tunnel. Then the tunnel split in two directions. To the left he saw a wide tunnel that gave off the foul odor of rotten-eggs. To the right was a small cave about three feet wide, so short that he couldn't stand up in it at all. It was from this tunnel that the dim light and the fresh air came. Davey decided to skip the large dreary tunnel and see where the smaller one led. He had to alternate between walking and crawling in order to fit through the small space. Mostly he crawled. Progress was extremely difficult at times.

If Davey had been limited to the physical strength he had for the last seven years, he would never have made it. In one place rocks had been piled or had fallen across the tunnel. There was a small opening near the top of the cave, just enough to allow air and light to enter. Grabbing one rock after another, Davey made the hole larger until there was enough room for him to squeeze through. As

he struggled and inched forward he saw the source of the light just ahead. He pushed and squirmed a few more yards until he crawled up and out of the tunnel into the brightness of a cloudless, moonlit sky.

Davey was on the side of a mountain. It was quite steep. As he stood up he had to be careful not to slide. Looking up, he could see a stark, shining conical peak. He did not want to go that way. Looking down, he saw a smooth black surface with occasional patches of stones, sand and soil. He was about a third of the way down the mountainside. Above the tree line the mountain was grey and barren. There were a few low bushes scattered here and there. Where the bushes ended he saw trees. They were pines that gradually increased in height and beauty. Further down the mountainside the trees reminded him of the tall Ponderosa pines of the Rocky Mountains. He couldn't be sure from this distance, but he thought he could see hardwood trees beyond the evergreens. In that direction, the dark green forest was broken by a meandering line down the middle of it. The line was actually a rippling river shining like

silver in the moonlight. It seemed to have its source somewhere to the north. He couldn't tell exactly where. All along the winding glistening stream the forest was an even deeper green. The trees in the valley looked like a bumpy green carpet.

Davey knew a lot about trees and plant life from all the time he spent reading, watching documentaries on TV and surfing the net. There were trees as far as the eye could see. Nothing moved. He couldn't hear a single sound. That bothered him, though he didn't know why.

*I think I'd better take a better look around before I start down the side of the mountain. I hope my legs are up to this.* He looked to his left and knew immediately why he could see so clearly even though it was night. The moon was incredibly large. Davey didn't know if it was because this moon was larger or closer. It lit the night sky with a beautiful glow.

*Wow! This is just like some of the science fiction books I've read. I'm not seeing the 'man on the moon.' I can make out some craters and mountain ranges without a telescope!* With that thought

he closed his eyes tightly and pinched himself again, much harder than before. When he opened his eyes, he fully expected to find himself back home in his recliner in good old Long View, Connecticut, parked in front of the giant screen TV. Instead, the mountain was still there, the wilderness was still there, the river was still there and the large bright moon was definitely, well, you guessed it, still there.

“This is really weird!” he said. He enjoyed hearing a voice, even if it was just his own. “I can’t seem to make this dream end. I do wonder if I’ve imagined just once too often. It sure feels real, but it just can’t be, can it? What is this place? How did I get here? What should I do?” These and scores of other questions competed for first-place, his brain headed towards overload. *Stop it David Johnsen! I’ve got to stop letting my mind race out of control. I’ve got to stop and think. How do I get back home?*

His thoughts turned to his large suburban home in Long View, Connecticut, and to his parents. He could see them, all dressed-up as they often were. His dad’s name was Richard Johnsen. His mom’s

5name was Evelyn Esther Dereuter-Johnsen. She liked the hyphen, Davey didn't. Dad never gave an opinion.

Their house had eighteen rooms plus six full bathrooms, an indoor-outdoor pool and a couple of large Jacuzzis. The pool and the surrounding patio were like something out of a large resort in the Caribbean. The roof retracted fully into the ground so that when it was nice weather, you weren't even aware there was a roof. If it began to rain or the air temperature fell below 80 degrees, the roof automatically emerged from the ground, protecting swimmers and sunbathers. That's a nice feature to have in the Northeast. It's not one very many families can afford.

From the waist up, Davey was no weakling. Almost every day he swam in the pool. On the warm summer days he could swim with the roof open. On the cold or wet days, and there were many of those in Connecticut, the roof would remain closed. Either way, a flick of the thermostat could bring the water to exactly the best temperature for swimming.

Davey loved to swim. Most of his propulsion came from his arms. Years of struggling with crutches or in and out of cars with his weakened legs had helped him develop considerable upper body strength. Plus, he enjoyed sets of curls and other arm and chest exercises that he could do from a sitting position. He would never become an Olympic wrestling champion, but given the opportunity he could have beaten most guys his age at arm wrestling.

A bird called overhead, flying toward the dark woods by the river. He felt strangely relieved to see a bird in flight, even though it was just a sparrow. It was the first living thing he had seen in this place.

*It's time for me to get moving. Once I reach that wilderness, it's going to be a lot darker.* So picking himself up, rejoicing again in his newfound walking ability, he started off in the direction where he hoped to find the river.

People in jungles and frontier areas usually settle along rivers, he thought. Since Davey had spent a lot of time watching PBS and Discovery Channel and doing research online, he had a good deal of

knowledge that would help him in this new place, even if it couldn't help him figure out where this new place was. He still wasn't absolutely sure this wasn't all a crazy dream.

He said, "If this is real, I don't have a clue where in the world I am. I don't even know where in the universe I am!" Then, adapting a line from a famous movie, he added with a chuckle, "I'm not in Connecticut anymore." He found himself humming the song "We're off to see the Wizard" as he continued down the mountain.

For five minutes he carefully cut a path across the mountainside, gradually angling his way down like a skier traversing a slope. He was making pretty good progress, but focused more on songs from "The Wizard of Oz" than on his feet.

His hummed rendition of "Over the Rainbow" was interrupted when his left foot caught the edge of a sharp rock. Everything changed in a hurry. Remember, he was fairly new at this walking business, and this wasn't easy terrain for a novice. He slipped and tripped and down he went. Digging his heels into the rocky ground, he was about to pick himself up when the ground beneath him started

moving, sliding down the mountainside, bringing Davey along with it. Desperately he grabbed at the dirt and volcanic rock, trying to stop. But the cooled lava was very slippery. A thin layer of sand, stones and dirt was spread over the dark shiny surface. The more he grabbed the more stuff seemed to join him on his journey down the mountainside.

“Ayeeeeeee!” he yelled as he slid down a good portion of the mountain. Lots of dirt, pebbles and larger stones joined him until he felt like the whole mountain might come along for the ride. After what seemed like hours, he came to a place where the mountain was not nearly as steep. Sliding on his butt, he stuck his heels into the ground, flipped over on his face and stopped, grabbing at the dirt with his hands. His fingernails were filled with dirt and small pebbles. The palms of both hands were almost rubbed raw. His nose was clogged with dirt and grains of sand.

*Plllunk, Plunk, Plunk-Plunk! Ker THUMP!* Davey had stopped but the dirt and stones were still sliding and hitting his back and the top of his head. Finally they stopped.



Davey hacked up sand from his throat and tried to clear his nostrils so he could breathe. Then he took stock of himself. His ribs hurt a little, but he found no serious injuries.

“This walking business isn’t as easy as it looks,” he said. In spite of the bruises he did feel rather good about making 15 minutes worth of the downward climb in about 15 seconds.

*Well, my clothes are really a mess now. Mom will never understand this! But at least I’m still in one piece. I must be more careful. Then again, she’ll never believe that I fell while walking down a mountainside, or while walking at all, come to think of it!*

The rest of his hike down the mountain was a lot less scary. The incline gradually grew less steep until he reached the valley floor below. Looking back he could see that the mountain came to a cone-shaped peak, with part of the cone broken off. This all fit in with the kind of rock he’d just used as a giant slide. *It must be an old volcano,* Davey thought. *That would explain the smoky tunnel too. I’m glad it isn’t too active.*

He heard a deep grumbling. It wasn't the volcano. The noise came from the inside, not the outside. His stomach was growling. He set off in the direction he believed was toward the river. The rumblings gradually became worse.

*Funny, in all of the adventures I imagined at home I never thought about my stomach growling. He smiled. Things just aren't the same as you imagine they will be.*

His mind wandered back to a trip he had taken to Disney World with his parents two years before. He had eagerly looked forward to that trip. When it finally arrived, his dad had scheduled numerous business meetings and Mom spent most of the time with her friends. He spent the time at the wonderful amusement park with a small group of other kids with similar physical limitations. He wouldn't have minded that so much, but he had never met any of them before. Everyone else had at least one friend in the group, but Davey didn't fit in. It was not the trip he had anticipated. Once again there had been too little time as a family and too much time alone. That was the way his parents were.

The moon was setting, its soft yellow light dimming. It was getting very dark. As a single tear slid down his cheek, Davey found a spot to sit and think. Instead, he fell asleep.

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Three hours later, as the sun was beginning to rise behind him, Davey awoke. Or should I say he was awakened by some strange sounds. Once again the sounds were coming from him. His growling stomach no longer amused him. He felt hungrier than he'd ever been before. He'd never gone without food. On the occasions when they were together, his family always dined at 6:00 p.m. Of course, most of the time, they didn't eat together. In any case, the staff served Davey's dinner promptly at the same time every day. In this new place, dawn was about to break.

“Punctuality is one of the keys to success. If you can't be on time, you won't make a dime,” his dad often said to him or to anyone who would listen.

It took Davey another three hours to walk through the forest and reach the river. A path cut its way quite nicely to the riverside. He looked at the sun rising and the land filling with an orange light.

“This must be the west bank, he whispered to himself. “At least it would be the west bank if the sun rises the same way here as it does back home. I wonder if the water is any good to drink.”

It had been quite a while since he drank his last soda. His lips were parched and his tongue was dry. Bending down, he cupped his hands, bringing some of the crystal clear water to his mouth. He was hesitant at first, knowing that parasites and other nasty little critters can live in rivers and streams. This water was delicious, more wonderful than any water he had ever tasted, more wonderful than any water he had ever imagined. After his first sip, he drank deeply from the river. The water was so cold, clear and refreshing. *This is richer and more filling than water I'm used to*, he reflected. He would never forget that water and that feeling. *Honestly, I'd really love a burger or a pizza, but this is better than nothing*. He noticed his stomach had stopped growling as the water reached its destination.

*I don't know why, but I do feel much stronger now, ready to start another walk.* Turning to his left he could see the source of the river. It was a beautiful waterfall on the side of a majestic mountain, much larger than the one he had just left. He was at least a mile away, but the waterfall was so powerful he could faintly hear it. The silver strand of the falls cascaded hundreds of feet, glistening in early morning light. He had never seen such a beautiful waterfall before. Niagara with its gigantic force couldn't compare with the simple beauty of this silver thread seen at a distance. Only the mountains could be seen from his vantage point. The rest of the North was hidden from view by the deep forest that grew right up to the riverbank.

*Well, I must be off, and if I am to stick to the river, which at least will keep me from dying of thirst, I must go south.* He paused for another drink of water and checked his sports watch.

“Wow, I've been gone a long time! Mom must be frantic, and James too,” he said to himself. James was their butler and was in charge of the other two servants: a maid, Gertrude, and a French chef, Marcel. James and Gertrude had actually done more to raise

Davey than either of his parents. It never occurred to Davey that his dad might be concerned.

Davey had been homeschooled because of his physical limitations. Homeschooling is pretty popular today among parents who prefer to combine education with passing on traditional moral values and faith in their children. For Davey's parents, homeschooling wasn't like that at all. Neither one of them made much of an effort to be involved in his education. They were much too busy with careers and social life for that. Homeschooling at their house meant they hired an endless supply of private tutors at considerable expense. Since he didn't go to public school and his parents seemed hesitant to have him get together with others his age, Davey didn't make many friends.

When his tutors weren't with him, he spent much of his time sitting in his recliner in his own special entertainment room. With the touch of a button on his multiple remote controls he could listen to his surround sound stereo, enjoy his giant screen 3-D HDTV or watch a Blu-ray movie of the highest quality. On some particularly

boring summer days he would push a button on the remote and access the computer games and internet activities. All were shown in brilliant resolution on the same giant screen. At times he was entertained by these games. Other times the games could become downright boring.

His mom often said, “You can do whatever you want in your special room.” Sometimes Davey responded to his mom by thinking, *Do whatever I want? Yeah, right!*

Davey thoughts moved back to his present situation. *Oh well, what’s done is done. I don’t know of any way of getting back. I don’t even know where I am.* A rush of similar and even sadder thoughts filled Davey’s mind, until soon he was feeling quite homesick and sorry for himself. He felt very alone. It didn’t seem like a dream any longer. As he walked a few quiet tears began to wind their way down his cheeks.

*This is no way to act on an adventure! I never shed a single tear in all my imaginary exploits,* he thought. Then Davey wiped his face

and snorted, willing himself to stop crying. He washed his face in the river, took another drink, sighed deeply, and continued walking.

“I’m sure glad no one was around to see that. Crud, I’ll be fifteen soon!” he said. But as most men and boys don’t like to admit, they do sometimes cry. In spite of his mixed feelings about his folks, Davey was very homesick, just the way many teens get homesick if they go away to a boarding school, or even for their freshman year at college. Young soldiers and sailors get homesick when they go off to boot camp or on their first deployment far away from home. Even older sailors get homesick on long deployments. You can take my word for it.

The rest of the morning he walked and walked. Most of it was easy going, walking on a clear path next to the river. In a few places parts of the river bank had eroded and collapsed. The path disappeared and the bank became a gooey marsh. In these areas Davey had to cut away from the bank into a tangle of deep undergrowth that was near the edge of the wilderness.



As he tried to circumvent one of those marshy areas, Davey stepped into a really muddy place with his left foot. His right foot was on solid ground, but his left leg was rapidly sinking down into the gush. Reaching to his right he grabbed onto the ground. Pushing and pulling with his hands and right foot, he struggled against the mud. Using all his strength he pulled his left leg free.

“Oh CRUD!” he said as the suction of the mud pulled his sneaker from his foot. He jumped onto the solid ground without it. Turning around he yelled at the marsh, “Oh no you don’t!”

The mud was quickly closing over his shoe. Reaching over as far as he could without falling into the mud, Davey grabbed hold of the sneaker just as it was about to disappear. The mud held it fast for a moment. He pulled with all his might.

“You’re not getting away from me, you stinkin’ shoe!” Davey yelled at the inanimate object. With one last pull the sneaker came loose with a loud *PLOP!* Mud sprayed everywhere. His clothing was a total mess. And he was right about his shoe. It was really “stinkin!” When he made it back to the river, he found a little eddy.

Sitting down on the river bank, he did his best to clean himself off. He immersed the shoe into the water and scrubbed it. No matter how he tried he couldn't get all of the mud off the outside or out of the inside of that shoe.

He pulled his shoe back on. *Now that's not very comfortable!* If you have ever walked in wet shoes you know what he meant.

Even with a squishy shoe, he was thrilled with the knowledge that he could walk. When he came to a section of the path that was solid ground, he decided to run for fifty yards or so just to see if he could. As you may have figured out, he really could. He found himself running and leaping and jumping around, feeling the pure thrill of being able to do this simple thing most youth take for granted. In fact, Americans of all ages take walking and running so much for granted that we don't do enough of either. We do a lot of eating instead.

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The excitement he was feeling wore off quickly. His stomach began to growl all over again, reminding him that he hadn't eaten

in what seemed like forever! In his entire life he had never gone this long without something to eat. He tried not to think about it, but more and more he wanted food, especially a pizza. His bedroom at home with its top-notch pillow top mattress and warm blankets popped into his mind. Never before had he been this alone, or gone without food this long. It would have been the middle of the night in his home, perhaps 4:00 a.m. He had never been up that late before. In spite of the refreshing qualities of the water, he was beat, really beat.

*I have to rest a while. It doesn't seem too dangerous around here, but I'd better get off the path into the woods just in case.* Davey picked his way through the low brush near the riverbank and walked for a few minutes into the woods. As he did the trees changed, with the cedar trees near the river giving way to oaks and maples. In the midst of those he found a small grove of evergreen trees. He got under the cover of the low-lying pine branches. *I hope there aren't any snakes*, was his last thought. Then he fell sound asleep using some of the old pine needles as a mattress. He really was quite comfortable.

## CHAPTER 2

### *Another Surprise*



**N**othing bothered him as he slept for over five hours. He slept deeply, his body and spirit resting, unaware of any distractions. As he started to wake up, he heard, or thought he heard a growl. *That's not very far away*, he thought. He awoke with a start and gazed through two bleary eyes into the forest. *It was just your stomach growling, David Andrew Johnsen, you wimp!* He'd been called "wimp" a lot growing up. He stood up and stretched lazily.

He was fully awake and the sound returned. Though he was very hungry, it clearly was not the sound of his stomach he heard, but the low growl of some animal. It sounded BIG! It wasn't an angry sound,

rather a thoughtful, wondering type of growl. As Davey peered into the late afternoon shadows he caught a glimpse of a huge, brownish, furry body, not more than fifteen feet away.

“It’s, it’s a bear!” he shouted, and his fears ran wild, his heart beating in his chest like a drum. He looked around for something, anything with which he could defend himself. He grabbed a couple of rocks.

The bear came nearer, standing up on its back legs, sniffing the air. It was full-grown and must have weighed over seven hundred pounds. Davey threw a rock and hit the animal in the side of the head. The rock glanced off the bear and fell with a *thunk* right at its feet. Davey quickly decided that this was a very dumb thing to do. The stone hadn’t phased it one little bit. He dropped the other one. As the huge bear reared up high on its hind legs, Davey thought about running. Then he remembered that bears can run over thirty miles an hour. His next thought was that he was about to solve somebody’s hunger problem.

*Well, at least I won't be hungry anymore,* he thought. *Neither will this bear!* Then he laughed, trying to mask his terror. When the bear rose to its full height it looked down at him, gazing into his eyes with a strange look. Davey wasn't laughing anymore.

*This is it, I'm done for. What a lousy adventure!* He closed his eyes tightly and awaited his inevitable fate. But the animal turned around and simply ran away. As it ran Davey could hear it growling. Then he heard something that, well, sounded like words.

In fact what he thought he heard the bear saying was, "Ow! Ow! What was that rocks which hits Old Snuffles? Ow!" The voice trailed off through the patch of evergreens as the bear got further away.

Thoughts raced through Davey's mind. "Why, that voice came from that bear, or I'm going nuts! Maybe that's it! I'm a few French fries short of a Happy Meal! I'm not really here at all. This is all in my imagination."

He paused and pinched himself again, harder this time. "I'm positive that bear talked. It seemed to be a friendly voice. At least it was friendly until I hit it," he said. Instantly he was sorry he had hurt

Snuffles. He yelled out his regret to the bear, but Snuffles didn't hear him. The bear was running away from him through the woods.

So, Davey picked himself up and ran after the bear. I don't recommend that you run after just any bear you meet in the woods. Normally it's not such a great idea. Of course, it is not likely that you would be able to catch one. If you did you might have a difficult time figuring out what to do with it, unless you were Davy Crockett, Daniel Boone or Wild Man Grit of the Northern Mountains. Wild Man Grit is part of another story. Perhaps you will read about him some day in another book.

In his heart Davey was quickly convinced that this bear was different. He was so desperate for company that he'd talk to anyone, even a talking bear. He ran and ran but couldn't find Snuffles anywhere. Looking around he felt totally lost. In the dimly lit forest he wasn't even sure where the river was. He had strayed far off of the trail and lost his bearings.

He found himself wondering, *Did I really hear that bear talk? Maybe I'm hungrier than I thought. Suppose I'm looking for*

*a vicious bear? Adventures sure aren't all they're cracked up to be. I wish I hadn't thrown that rock. Just wish I'd never come to this crummy place. Wish I had a pizza. I wish I could just go home!*

With that, Davey sat down on a rock and began to cry, not caring he was a guy, not caring he was a teenager, not caring who heard him and not holding onto any hope that anyone would.

In a few minutes the bushes rustled behind him. Davey looked over his shoulder, but couldn't see anything. He looked back down at the ground feeling very forlorn. A huge hairy paw patted him on the back.

“Theres, theres my young fellers. I sees now you was just ascaresd of old Snuffles, althoughs I don't knows why.” It was the same voice he had heard before, and it was a voice he felt he could trust. Davey put his head up against Snuggles, and hugged his furry warmth.

“Well, Mr. Snuffles,” Davey said, “In my country bears aren't very friendly, and of course, they don't talk.”



“We haves unfriendly bears heres too. In facts, mosts of the animals heres do not talks either.”

*What horrible grammar, thought Davey with a chuckle. Still at this moment he was so glad to have a friend, even a bear. He felt really safe with Snuffles. Besides, if he had planned to eat me he could have started in by now. In that case I'd just be a dead meatball.*

“Well, fellers, you know I'm Snuffles, but who mights you be.”

“My name is Davey and I'm from a place called Longview in Connecticut.”

“It must be a beautifuls view, Daveys!”

“Well, actually you really can't see much from Longview.”

“A place called the Long Views withouts a long views?” Snuffles said. Then he added, “And whats in the worlds is a Con-net-i-cut-tuts?”

“That's Con-nec-ti-cut,” corrected Davey, pronouncing each syllable carefully. “It was named for a Native American tribe that lived there way back before the colonists came.”

“You sure speaks funny words, Davey, Con-net-i-cut-uts, Americans. Sounds to me like stories of makes believes my Grampy Bear used to tell when I was a cub.”

“You mean, you’ve never heard of Con-net-i-cut-tut, I mean, Connecticut or America?”

“No, but then I’ve never sees a young-uns with such strange clothes and shoes before either.” He touched Davey’s synthetic shirt. “That sures is funny materials and the clothes you wears are, wells, just plains weird! Nots cotton, not wools! I don’t knows whats it is, but something tells me thats you’re nots telling tall tales. Davey, tell old Snuffles somes more abouts how you gots here.”

Davey quickly told his whole tale up to this point. He knew if he couldn’t trust this bear, he would have already been breakfast, lunch, supper, or all three! As he shared his story, Snuffles seemed to be studying him carefully. He listened politely, asking Davey to go over as many details as he could remember. Davey was amazed he could describe quite a bit of what he had experienced because everything had happened so fast. Blu-ray discs, laptops, HDTV’s

7and remote controls made no sense to Snuffles at all. Evidently this place, wherever it was, had no electronic conveniences.

Davey's stomach grumbled. Snuffles perked his ears up when he heard the low, distinct *grrr,umble*, sound. Instantly Snuffles knew what it was.

“Why, what a friends I am! Talks your ears offs I does and badgers you with questions and all the times you are hungrys! I'll takes you to my friend the Old Traders downs rivers. He'll have foods to the likings of the little fellers.” Actually, Davey was not all that little, but if you are a 700 pound bear, most people are pretty small, relatively speaking.

“Let's go!!!” Davey cried out, not even trying to hide his enthusiasm for Snuffles' latest suggestion. Immediately they were on their feet and headed toward the river once again. Davey didn't know where they were going, but visions of increasingly large pizzas covered with rich sauce, cheese and loads of pepperoni danced in his head.

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