

All The Way Home

An animated short

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Birthday girl, Lyla, is struggling to process her emotions following the sudden death of her father. After a morning spent exploring nearby fields, she finds herself lost and late for her birthday party.

To make it home on time Lyla must take a shortcut through a forest. She will encounter mythical creatures and see some wondrous sights, but not all is as it seems. This is no ordinary forest and if Lyla cannot overcome the dangers lurking within, she might never see home again.

Characters



LYLA is struggling with the grief that she feels since the death of her dad. She is a loving, kind, adventurous girl. She loves nature and animals and aspires to be a veterinarian when she's older. Lyla is brave and intelligent. She is tough and gentle.



THE FAUN is mischievous and sly. He believes that the forest belongs to him and cunningly defends his territory. He overestimates his intelligence and considers himself to be of the greatest importance. He too, is scared. He doesn't know how or why he is in the forest.



BRUCE is a Sasquatch. A hulking, hairy, bipedal, primate with a heart of gold. Bruce is lonely and scared. He is on his own in the forest and spends his days hiding in the shadows. He wants to find his family. The forest is not his home.



THE DRAGON is huge and colourful. Beautiful and ferocious. She fiercely commands the forest as her domain and does not hesitate to destroy intruders. The Dragon rules the forest with an iron fist.

All The Way Home

LYLA sits at the kitchen table of her family home, wearing an oversized badge on her jumper with 'Happy 9th Birthday' emblazoned on the front. She is holding a picture frame that contains a photo from a previous birthday. The picture shows Lyla with her parents. Lyla's MOTHER walks over and attempts to comfort her daughter. She tells her that she misses Lyla's father too, but he is watching over her and he would want her to have a lovely birthday. Lyla rips off the badge and storms out of the house, her mother calling after, reminding her to be home on time for her party.

We focus on the photograph and then the picture comes to life. Lyla's last birthday with her dad. She opens a present, a beautiful carved wooden chess set. Lyla is very happy. Her dad tells her that he will teach her how to play and she will be a champion player.

Lyla runs through nearby fields, exploring the vast rural area. She comes across a goat pen and notices that one of the animals has their horns stuck in the fence. She struggles to free the goat then gives it a pat on the head and tells the goat to be careful next time.

As the day moves on Lyla begins to realise that she has wandered far from home, she can see her house in the distance but cannot seem to remember which way she came. The sun is beginning to set, and Lyla starts to panic that she will be late for her party. A dense forest stands between her and her house, an old wooden sign says THE FOREST OF TROUBLES. Hesitantly, Lyla decides that going through the forest would be the quickest way home.

Lyla enters the dark forest; with every step the darkness draws nearer. She walks a couple of hundred yards and encounters upon a rather odd-looking goat-like creature. Lyla remarks that she recently met a family of goats. The creature is incredibly offended by this, he angrily introduces himself as the Faun. The Faun is irritated by the presence of a human in his forest and refuses to let her pass unless she can solve his riddle. She agrees and quickly answers correctly. The Faun is in disbelief, he accuses Lyla of cheating and being a mind reader. The defeated Faun finally concedes and lets Lyla pass. As she begins to walk away the Faun calls her back and warns her about the forest. He explains that the forest is a place of dark magic, and it can change people. Lyla doesn't believe him but then he reveals that he hasn't always been a faun, he was once a happy child, just like her.

Lyla carries on walking, nervously singing to herself. There is noise all around her, something moving in the brush. Shadows flash through the trees. Lyla turns and runs straight into a huge figure. She looks up at an 8ft tall BIGFOOT. Lyla curls into a ball, terrified of the huge Ape. To her surprise he introduces himself as BRUCE. He offers her food, some freshly picked berries. Lyla takes the berries but does not eat them. Lyla begins to calm, realising the gentle and childlike nature of the hulking creature. Bruce explains that he cannot let Lyla go any further because the forest is too dangerous. He warns her of a ferocious beast that lives in the forest, and he does not want Lyla to be hurt.

Lyla explains her predicament; she must get home. She tells Bruce about her father and how he died recently, and she needs to get home, or her mother will be terribly upset. Bruce agrees to let her pass but only if she can beat him in a game of chess, which she does, rather quickly. Bruce confesses that he has never played chess before, but he is hoping to learn one day. Lyla explains that her father taught her to play, and he was an excellent teacher. Bruce shares with Lyla that he is all alone in the forest. He has no family and does not know if he ever has. Lyla comforts Bruce and promises him that she will return, and she will teach him how to play chess. Bruce reluctantly agrees to let her pass.

Lyla carries on her journey, noticing that the forest has grown incredibly dark. She moves through the thick brush and finds a beautiful lake surrounding a huge volcano. It is bright and sunny again and Lyla is enjoying the natural beauty all around her. Suddenly, the volcano begins to rumble. Thick, grey clouds roll in, thunder and lightning. Lyla stops dead in her tracks as out of the volcano rises a massive DRAGON.

Lyla stands tall, trying to conceal her fear. The Dragon bellows that Lyla has woken her from her slumber and now she will eat her. Lyla demands that the Dragon let her pass. The Dragon is incredulous and laughs at Lyla's suggestion. The Dragon reveals that she knew Lyla had entered the forest and she has been watching her. She also comments on her father's death to further hurt Lyla. The Dragon takes a deep breath, flames rippling in her nostrils but Lyla steps back and breathes and huge flow of BLUE FLAME at the Dragon. The Dragon whimpers and cowers. Lyla once again demands that she be allowed to pass. The Dragon retreats into the volcano and as she does, the clouds' part and the sun shines bright once more.

Lyla begins to creep past the volcano. She stops and shouts an apology to the dragon. She never meant to hurt her, and she forgives the Dragon for trying to eat her. The Dragon pokes her head out of the volcano and smiles at Lyla. She wishes her a happy birthday and tells her to get home quickly.

Lyla runs the rest of the way to her house. She sits at her kitchen table and eats birthday cake with her mother. The family photo at the head of the table.

Later, Lyla is back in the forest teaching Bruce and the Faun how to play chess. The Dragon, having learned the error of her ways now flies high overhead, keeping watch of the forest. She calls down to the Faun with tips for his next move. PAN to the old wooden sign at the entrance that now reads, 'THE FOREST OF FRIENDSHIP'.



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