

This story is brought to you by Ririro.com for free. Our mission is to give all children in the world free access to a variety of stories. The stories can be read, downloaded and printed online and cover a wide range of topics, including animals, fantasy, science, history, diverse cultures and much more.

Support our mission by sharing our website. We wish you a lot of fun reading!



Ririro

IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

Ririro

Bambi (13/25)

One day they went to look for the little clearing in the depth of the woods where Bambi had last met the old stag. Bambi told Faline all about the old stag and grew enthusiastic.

"Maybe we'll meet him again," he said. "I'd like you to see him."

"It would be nice," said Faline boldly. "I'd really like to chat with him once myself." But she wasn't telling the truth for, though she was very inquisitive, she was afraid of the old stag.

The twilight was already dusky gray. Sunset was near. They walked softly side by side where the leaves hung quivering on the shrubs and bushes and permitted a clear view in all directions. Presently there was a rustling sound near by. They stopped and looked towards it. Then the old stag marched slowly and powerfully through the bushes, into the clearing. In the drab twilight he seemed like a gigantic gray shadow. Faline uttered an involuntary cry. Bambi controlled himself. He was terrified, too, and a cry stuck in his throat. But Faline's voice sounded so helpless that pity seized him and made him want to comfort her.

"What's the matter?" he whispered solicitously, while his voice quavered, "what's the matter with you? He isn't going to hurt us."

Faline simply shrieked again.

"Don't be so terribly upset, beloved," Bambi pleaded. "It's ridiculous to be so frightened by him. After all he's one of our own family."

But Faline wouldn't be comforted. She stood stock-still, staring at the stag who went along unconcerned. Then she shrieked and shrieked.

"Pull yourself together," Bambi begged. "What will he think of us?"

But Faline was not to be quieted. "He can think what he likes," she cried bleating again. "Ah-oh! Baoh!... It's terrible to be so big!"

She bleated again, "Baoh! Leave me," she went on, "I can't help it, I have to bleat. Baoh, baoh, baoh!"

The stag was standing in the little clearing, looking for tidbits in the grass.

Fresh courage came to Bambi who had one eye on the hysterical Faline, the other on the placid stag. With the encouragement he had given Faline he had conquered his own fears. He began to reproach himself for the pitiful state he was in whenever he saw the old stag, a state of mingled terror and excitement, admiration and submissiveness.

"It's perfectly absurd," he said with painful decision. "I'm going straight over to tell him who I am."

"Don't," cried Faline. "Don't! Baoh! Something terrible will happen. Baoh!"

"I'm going anyway," answered Bambi.

The stag who was feasting so calmly, not paying the slightest attention to the weeping Faline, seemed

altogether too haughty to him. He felt offended and humiliated. "I'm going," he said. "Be quiet. You'll see, nothing will happen. Wait for me here."

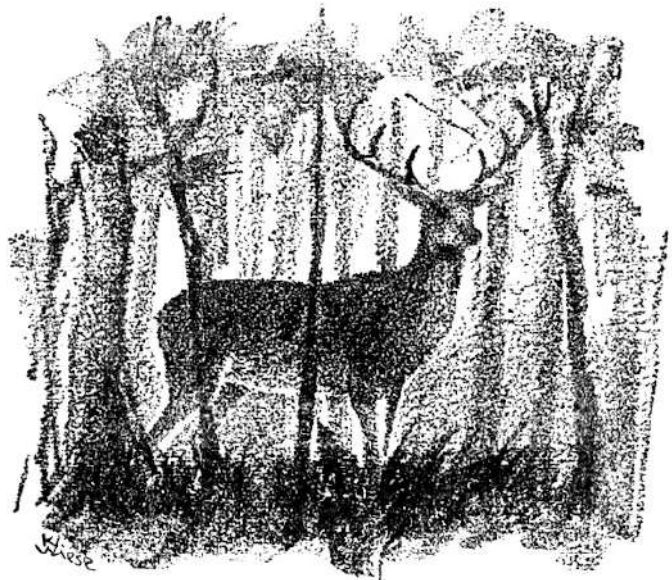
He went, but Faline did not wait. She hadn't the least desire or courage to do so. She faced about and ran away crying, for she thought it was the best thing she could do. Bambi could hear her going farther and farther away, bleating, "Baoh! Baoh!"

Bambi would gladly have followed her. But that was no longer possible. He pulled himself together and went forward.

Through the branches he saw the stag standing in the clearing, his head close to the ground. Bambi felt his heart pounding as he stepped out.

The stag immediately lifted his head and looked at him. Then he gazed absently straight ahead again.

The way in which the stag gazed into space, as though no one else were there, seemed as haughty to Bambi as the way he had stared at him.



Bambi did not know what to do. He had come with the firm intention of speaking to the stag. He wanted to say, "Good day, I am Bambi. May I ask to know your honorable name also?"

Yes, it had all seemed very easy, but now it appeared that the affair was not so simple. What good were the best of intentions now? Bambi did not want to seem ill-bred as he would be if he went off without saying a word. But he did not want to seem forward either, and he would be if he began the conversation.

The stag was wonderfully majestic. It delighted Bambi and made him feel humble. He tried in vain to arouse his courage and kept asking himself, "Why do I let him frighten me? Am I not just as good as he is?" But it was no use. Bambi continued to be frightened and felt in his heart of hearts that he really was not as good as the old stag. Far from it. He felt wretched and had to use all his strength to keep himself steady.

The old stag looked at him and thought, "He's handsome, he's really charming, so delicate, so poised, so elegant in his whole bearing. I must not stare at him, though. It really isn't the thing to do. Besides, it might embarrass him." So he stared over Bambi's head into the empty air again.

"What a haughty look," thought Bambi. "It's unbearable, the opinion such people have of themselves."

The stag was thinking, "I'd like to talk to him, he looks so sympathetic. How stupid never to speak to people we don't know." He looked thoughtfully ahead of him.

"I might as well be air," said Bambi to himself. "This fellow acts as though he were the only thing on the face of the earth."

"What should I say to him?" the old stag was wondering. "I'm not used to talking. I'd say something

stupid and make myself ridiculous ... for he's undoubtedly very clever."

Bambi pulled himself together and looked fixedly at the stag. "How splendid he is," he thought despairingly.

"Well, some other time, perhaps," the stag decided and walked off, dissatisfied but majestic.

Bambi remained filled with bitterness.