

At age 7, you could call me a curious kid. I enjoyed exploring and being outdoors really satisfied my thirst to discover new things. One of my most memorable moments growing up was the day I made a peculiar acquaintance. It was a hot summer's day and my parents had left to go somewhere, leaving my brother and me at home with a babysitter.

True to my inquisitive nature, I decided to go exploring our yard. I ran across emerald grass sprinkled with yellow daisies until I reached the enormous pear tree that stood boldly in the middle of the yard. Excitedly, I grabbed its rough mahogany bark and made my way up till I was completely engulfed by the canopy it created. I felt as though I was in my little secret kingdom shielded by leaves and branches. Finally, I decided to sit on my royal chair (the tyre swing) and as I swung, the wind held my hair up with every in and out motion of my legs. I looked up at the clear blue sky and promised myself that one day I would touch it. It was then that I decided it was time for my next destination. Looking at the wooden porch I declared that the crawl space under the house had the potential to offer me the fun I so dearly craved. Getting onto my hands and knees I began crawling under the house. The sensation of dirt against my legs and palms didn't bother me at all because it was evidence that I was on a true adventure. Then I heard it, a ruffling that made my heart stop. A ruffling that left me paralyzed. Looking forward, I remained still, unable to decide what to do until our eyes connected.

There stood the fluffiest, cutest grey and black baby racoon I had ever seen. His big black eyes stared at me with such fear. I quickly wiggled out from under the house and got some salami from the fridge. Slowly I broke pieces off the salami and carefully placed them in front of him. Timidly, he ate the salami and as soon as he was done he began walking into the yard. Thrilled, I followed him through the yard, past the little brown cabin and across the deserted dirt road until we reached a gentle stream in the middle of the forest. There amongst the trees I saw his little nest. I so desperately wanted to continue playing with him but I remembered that none of this would please Mum and Dad. This had to be my little secret. For 3 weeks I came back to the

stream every day and there I would find him waiting for me. During the first few days, he would only let me stroke him but by the third week he was letting me pick him up. He was the best thing that ever happened to me.

In the middle of my love affair with this baby racoon, one of my friends who happened to be our neighbour invited me over for dinner. I loved dinner at Ella's house; her dad made the most mouth-watering food. On this particular night he had made a scrumptious tomato-based stew. I especially enjoyed the chewy meat: it was the star of the dish. The conversation was flowing and laughter filled the air. Still impressed by dinner, I couldn't help asking Ella's dad what meat he had cooked so I could tell my mum the special recipe.

Well, he responded, I found a racoon in a tree behind the house, so I shot it, and there you have it: the tastiest stew you have ever had. I never saw my dear racoon again.