Sierra: Journey Through the Meadow

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Excitement arose as Malissa heard her horse River nicker outside of her window, almost trying to wake her up. She realized the snow had disappeared from weeks before, the aspen leaves were bright green, and the sun began to shine on her face. She knew this was the day. The day she had been waiting for all winter long. As a smile formed, she ran toward her closet to put on her riding clothes and boots. Not wanting to waste any time, she dashed toward the back door and grabbed an apple for breakfast.

Taking a bite, Malissa stepped outside. The smell of freshly bloomed wildflowers filled her nostrils. Entering River’s pen, she pulled out a treat from her pocket. She laid it flat on her palm and felt his fuzzy lips tickle her hand. “You’re a good boy, you ready for a ride?” she asked in a soft voice.

Malissa got to work getting him ready for the trail. Once she finished getting him saddled, she hopped into the black leather saddle and started to head toward Golden Trailhead. As they were riding, Malissa noticed that Mt. Scout still had snow on its tall peak. She hoped that the trail was all melted so riding wouldn’t be difficult. River started into a gallop as they continue on.

Arriving at the meadow on Golden trail, Malissa admired the beauty of her surroundings. She wanted to feel the tall purple fireweeds on her skin as the hot sun shown on her. She dismounted River and collapsed in the cool flowers. Taking a deep breath, she could smell the pines in the distance and heard the faint trickle of a nearby stream. As River was grazing, she looked over at him and asked herself, “What if River can talk?” After that silly question to herself, she called River over and gave him a carrot from the garden, when she was thinking back to her question, she remembered the legend of the rare flower that gives animals different superpowers. The special flower blooms every 20 year, grows near flowing water, and is purple. Remembering the sound of the trickling steam near by, Malissa decided to go on a flower hunt.

After looking for an hour and no success, . She decided to head back home because mom will be expecting them for lunch. Malissa mounted him and headed bac. When They got back. Her mom, Jodi was standing at the back door waiting, as she saw Malissa, she yelled, “How did I know that you went for a ride?” Malissa smiled.

            “See you in a bit River.” Malissa stated when stepping out of his pen. Jodi reached out her arm and gave her daughter a hug. “How was your ride?” Malissa thought of what to say, “Amazing!” Jodi smiled then stated, “There is a sandwich on the table for yo….”

Before she could finish talking, Malissa had already ran inside to her sandwich. After gobbling her lunch, she remembered that she needed to give River a bath, for their yearly camping trip. Later that afternoon, she went to her room to pack her white and brown duffle bag. This camping trip was special because where they camp, is where river and Malissa met for the first time. She saw him with a barb wire on his left leg, she walked up to him and help him which was by the river and waterfall.

            When Malissa finished packing, they headed out for the trail. As evening was starting to set they started for the trail. While riding, Malissa let River get a drink from the stream. While he was drinking they saw that rare purple wildflower on the side of the trail, that only blooms every 20 years and gives animals superpowers, when she was about to dismount to get a closer look to take picture, River had already eaten the flower, “River, spit it out!” River put his head down and nickered, then pranced around. Once she caught him she opened his mouth to see if he swallowed the flower, not finding an not finding any trace of it,, she decided that maybe it  wasn’t the rare flower, and they must continue to their camping site.

             As they were walking and enjoying the trail, Malissa started singing, Open the Eyes of My Heart from her church,  and all of the sudden she hears another voice joining her. It was River! Malissa’s eyes grew, “You can sing! You sound good!” River replied, “No, I wasn’t able to sing or talk before.”

That flower you just ate, must have been THE flower. River stated, “Yeah, I agree.” After that amazing experience, both River and Malissa started talking about their adventures in the past.

Then River thought of another adventure they could do. “We can have a rodeo and charge $1.00 a ticket and give the funds to the Children’s Hospital.” Malissa smiled then stated, “River, that’s brilliant! You smart beautiful horse you!” After that amazing idea, they arrived at their camping spot. Malissa set up her tent and built River a pen for him to sleep in as well. When the stars twinkled in the moonlight the two laid on their backs and stared at the sky until they fell asleep, dreaming of their new adventures.

When the sun arose, Malissa started a campfire for to cook her breakfast on. She fed River his oats and alfalfa. Once breakfast was over they headed back home, to start decorating for the rodeo. Malissa made fliers  about the rodeo and posted them up all over town. A few hours later, people started calling and wanted her to sign them up.

By the end of the day, all the spots were filled up for being in the show. They had barrel racers, jumpers, and pole benders. Jodi, was so proud of her daughter that she gave Malissa $100 dollars to go toward her fund raising. After a few days of hard work, it was finally here, the day of the rodeo.

She started the roundup with prayer, and had River say the Pledge of a Allegiance. Everyone was so stunned that there was a talking horse.  After a two hours it was time to declare the winners, “Third place goes to Kyler Mcarter, for jumping.” Once she announced, Kyler heard her name and she ran up and got her ribbon. “Second place goes to Jack brown for pole bending.” When Jack heard his name, he ran down and also got a ribbon. “The winner of 2024’s rodeo is Audreyy Hart!” Audrey jumped up with her horse and ran up to get her prize. Malissa put a wreath on her horse Brittney, and gave Audrey a trophy.

At the end of the day, Malissa and Jodi counted the money. they had raised $899.00 she started to cry! She ran to River’s pen and told him on how much was raised. He suggested they go deliver the money immediately.

 So, she hopped on him bareback and rode down to the hospital. All the doctors and nurses were overjoyed with the money!

 River felt compassion for all the kids with cancer, so he sang a song for them. Two minutes later, Malissa announced to the kids, “How would you like to see River every week and have him sing a song for y’all.” All the kids screamed, “Yes!” The doctors and nurses were so overjoyed by their kindness. After a lot of petting and a few pictures, they headed back with hearts full.

Malissa never thought of how amazing it could be to have a talking horse.