



MARK PEARSON
MUSIC

The Beginning Of The Rainbow

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DEFINITION

GNELF (gu-nelf) n, pl. **GNELFS** (gu-nelf's) 1. One of a kind of small, magical creatures believed by some to be the forerunners of all known life. 2. Colorful, non identified beings often seen and felt only in one's heart's eye. adj. To describe a color which seems to magically glow, i.e., gnelf green (from New American Gnelf)

BEFORE THE STORY

Individually, gnelfs are very small. They are perhaps the size of an average feeling or a good idea. At one time, they peacefully and plentifully covered the earth. If you had chanced upon the world then, the earth would have appeared as a gigantic garden, always in bloom, The bloom of color could change before your eyes, for as a gnelf's mood changed, so would its colors. Because gnelfs appear more as color than shapes, the sight of that world then would surely have been beyond description.

If you have ever been to the ocean and seen the water mysteriously lighted, you have seen a small reminder of that wondrous time. People today are explaining the glow of the oceans as phosphorescence in the water, It is more truly a reminder of the time of gnelfs.

As well as appearing as more color than form, gnelfs look at the world in terms of color and warmth, rather than shapes and outlines as we have come to perceive things.

The gnelf's reason for being has never been adequately explained, Remember, however, they lived best at a time which did not ask for reasons.

Their sharp decline may now be partly explained because they understand life to be more of a feeling than a thought,

For whatever reasons, as other forms of life became more and more

prevalent on the earth, these simple beings began to disappear. After once covering the earth, they then became isolated into colonies of varying sizes. Even these began to disappear, leaving individual gnelfs to find their own way in the world. You may have chanced upon one at times and felt a peaceful and unexplained presence for a moment here or a moment there.

This story will hopefully give you a chance to chance upon another.

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CHAPTER ONE

"To know what one is looking for is the greatest step toward finding it,"

— Sady saying--date unknown

It is not known how he alone survived. If someone could ask him, Ivan would not know. Gnelfs cannot tell you the how of something unless they know the why of it. Because this story is just beginning, Ivan does not know why. Perhaps when this story has ended he could tell you. By then, however, it should be clear to all of us. Gnelfs, born as they are with only a limited number of words inside them, will not waste any of those words explaining something which should be understood just as well in silence.

But already the story runs ahead of itself. Let us return to the beginning which happens to be the beginning only because it is the end of something else...

...Another gnelf colony had disappeared; everyone but Ivan. The gnelfs world of warmth and bright colors had turned to darkness. Perhaps there was not enough room for them in a reasonable world. Perhaps they disappeared because of indifference or neglect or even by design, but, one morning, Ivan awoke alone in the darkness which even the sun could not completely hide. He looked vainly for the colors which were no longer present, which had escaped into the past.,

"Perhaps they have just moved while I was asleep," thought Ivan,

But where should one look? Because his world, until that morning, had been complete he had never thought to look beyond what he knew or to even wonder if there was a world beyond his own.

One direction is as good as any other when you do not know where you are or where you might be going. For this reason Ivan began moving in the direction he was facing when he woke up that morning. He moved by half gliding, half walking, and half floating. Although that can be slow going, it is half again as fast as ancient gnelfs who could only glide and walk.

Without knowing it, Ivan was traveling from the far side of what has been called the unknown forest into that forest's heart. Stories had long been told by those who lived on the near side of the unknown forest that the world ended somewhere inside the heart of the forest. These stories had been unquestionably told for so long that every near-sided creature had come to believe it. Just in case there could be a world somewhere beyond the unknown, those who told and listened to the stories called anything which might lay beyond the heart of the forest (which would now include Ivan) the "great perhaps." So it was that Ivan was journeying from the "great perhaps" into the unknown without even knowing

When gnelfs are happy, they appear red. When they are sad, very blue. As Ivan moved, his colors changed as he traveled inside himself between happiness and sadness.

The forested world outside himself appeared as the subdued rich colors of something that had been there for a long time, Parts of it appeared brighter than

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others. This was where the sunlight reached its fingers through the boughs of the trees and helped to light his way, He was seeing everything for the first time. Because gnelfs are not large, growing brighter in color and not larger as they grow older, Ivan was astounded at the very size of this new world. He stopped to stare up at the tall old trees which seemed to push their way through the earth far into the blue beyond., He could not see the tops of many of them, and he wondered if their heads saw through the giant blue into a greater, even more unknown world.

As Ivan saw all of this he found it harder to explain or describe any of it to himself. A sound began to come from inside of him. It was a high--pitched sound that, if one were to try and describe it, one could say was a whistle. As he continued to see more and more, not even whistles could empty all of the excitement and wonderment building up inside him, He began to sing, He could not control himself. As he would soon realize, words hooked to music and coming from deep inside a gnelf exist in unlimited quantities for just such circumstances and situations.

*"The sky was never blue before,
The trees were never here before,
The grass was never green before,
I saw it.
Why is it so blue? Because
Why is it now here? Because
Why is it so green? Because
I saw it.
It may be old but it is new
It might always have been green and blue
But that was never definite
Until I saw... "*

Before Ivan reached the last word, he was stopped in his tracks by a strange and nearby sound, It was not a tree sound or a wind sound or a sky sound. Ivan quickly turned red and blue and back again. He did not know whether to turn around at once or wait a moment before he turned. Ivan had just realized, you see, that he was not alone in his new world which was quickly being covered with darkness.



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CHAPTER TWO

“One hand is capable of holding on to much...never more than when it holds on to another’s hand.”

— Sady saying-date unknown

Ivan did not turn around. Something inside him made him move cautiously forward. He was certainly too frightened to be excited and too excited to be frightened. He crept carefully closer to the sound. Peering between two blades of grass, he saw before him an owl who looked for all the world very old and wise, while at the same time looking very young and foolish., Ivan saw blue tears rolling down the owl’s cheeks. He was so surprised that he gave out a whistle.

“Who is there? “ sniffed the owl indignantly, for she was just as surprised as Ivan that she was not alone in her world.

Ivan remained speechless as he parted the leafy grass and showed himself before the owl shivering with fear and excitement

“You have found me in a strange state, small being,” said the owl,

“What I am doing now is called crying. It is how, when one is sad or confused or some such thing, one washes one’s face inside and out. Because I find myself a little sad and confused, I find it necessary to wash both sides of my face. The inside is always the most difficult and painful side to wash.”

Ivan sat silently listening, slowly and uncontrollably changing colors.

“The problem I am having,” continued the owl, “is that by nature owls are old and wise. If someone is by nature old and wise, they naturally cannot be young and foolish. Because this is my first day being what I am, and having lost any chance to be young and foolish, I have decided to wash my face inside and out to better face myself.

As Ivan heard this he decided that, although owls certainly are old and wise, they can also be partly sad.

“If you are wise could you explain some things to me? “ asked Ivan, using up a few precious words.

“Oh, yes, I could explain most everything., The only thing that I cannot explain is why it is that I can explain them. Perhaps when I have more experience I could even explain that. Some of my explanations may not make sense now even to me, for I have not explained anything to anyone before. Before any explanations, however, let me tell you that my name is Sady, the sage (meaning wise), old (no matter the age) owl.”

“Ivan,” said Ivan pointing a small finger at himself.

Sady began by explaining that she could tell Ivan most everything that he wished to know. If she told him everything, however, then he too would be old and wise before he knew it.

“There is only one thing as good as being old and wise,” she continued, “and that is to be young and foolish if you have the chance. Sit down, Ivan, and I shall try to

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explain enough to be of help to you but not enough so that you no longer have a chance to be young and foolish.”

Ivan was more than happy to accept her offer for there was much that he wished to know, and, besides, he was very tired.

They talked through the night. Ivan did not have to use up many words for the owl seemed to understand before the question was asked what it was that Ivan should know.

“Why did my home disappear?” wondered Ivan aloud.

Sady did not speak for a long time. She sat looking wise, while Ivan began to feel more and more foolish. He wondered why he had started with such a foolish question.

“Oh, no, Ivan, it is not a foolish question. It is just that I can think of no wise answer. Perhaps if I could, I would be the wisest of the wise. And if I was wise enough to answer there would be no need for such wisdom. I only know that the world has suffered a great loss without perhaps even knowing it. A little enchantment has been taken from the world which needs all the magic and enchantment that there can be,”

After they both had sat silently for a long time thinking about Sady’s answer, Ivan explained about the colors of his home and wondered if he could find such colors again.

“I think it is possible if you look hard enough and don’t get discouraged, Ivan. Even if you do not find them you are fortunate to know what it is in this world that you are looking for. You will find out soon enough that not everyone is so fortunate.”

As Ivan began to feel excitement about possibly finding the colors of his home again, Sady continued with more words of wisdom that Ivan only half heard. She talked about how it is important to experience for yourself instead of learning only from others and how feelings were as important as knowledge. She told him not to be too afraid of the unknown and yet to be cautious.

As she talked Ivan, half awake and half asleep, forgot about the colors of his home and thought how nice it would be if he could stay forever with Sady and just listen to her talk. As the night began to give way to the new day, Ivan told Sady that he wished to stay always with her.

“Perhaps that is a good idea, Ivan,” the owl said, realizing wisely that many things are often more easily said than done. “The first thing that you must know then is that owls sleep the day away and are awake during the night. It is sort of an upside downside way of doing things. It is now time for me to go to sleep, for the sun is beginning its daily run across the sky. Good day. I shall see you in the first of the night.”

With that, she closed her eyes and fell fast asleep.

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Ivan tried hard to do the same. Every time he closed his eyes, however, the sun would sneak in and wake him up. He would move about and explore a little careful not to lose sight of the owl lest she disappear, Then he would try to sleep again. So he spent the day with a little napping, a little exploring, and without the owl once moving from her place of rest.

When the sun began to set, the owl opened her eyes stretched a little and proclaimed she was ready to start a new night. Ivan bravely proclaimed the same although by now he could hardly keep his eyes open.

Every time Say would begin to talk, Ivan, trying oh so hard to stay awake, would nod off to sleep.

After waking him for the fifth time, Say said, "I think you have learned your first wisdom by experience, You have learned you were born to see the world in the light of day while I am meant to look at it through the dark of night. It certainly would be easier for me not to let you go, for I will worry about you, but I know that you must `be on your way,"

Ivan sadly nodded his head at this new wisdom.

Sady saw his sadness.

"I have something to give you as you go along your daylight way. As

the sun shines, you shall see a little of yourself cast in darkness. When you are closer to the coming or the going of the sun you shall see more of it. You shall come to know it as a shadow. It will be a companion for you and a reminder of me, your nighttime friend."

Ivan turned bright red from excitement when he heard this.

"Would you like to sleep tonight under my wing before you begin your journey? "

Ivan was fast asleep, snugly under Sady's wing, before he could answer. Sady spent the night studying books without pictures as Ivan slept soundly till the sun began to rise again.

Ivan was very happy as he saw his new shadow in the morning light, but also very sad.

"I have nothing to give to you, Sady," the precious words pouring from his mouth, Without thinking, however, he began to sing a song for the owl.

*"Friends are like a pair of hands,
So good for one another.
Friends are like a pair of hands,
No one quite like another.
One hand can do a lot of things,
Alone it does just fine,
But so much more with another's hand,
And I'm glad to give you mine."*

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"You have very old feelings for one so young in knowledge, Ivan, You have given me more than you may know., I shall remember you and your song always in my heart, for I cannot sing myself. It is time for me to sleep and for you to go, my young and foolish friend. If you travel this direction," pointing over her shoulder, "you will in one day and one night leave the forest and find other creatures. Don't stop inside the forest. Good luck."

Good luck to us all thought Ivan, as he started slowly off with his shadow right behind him.

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CHAPTER THREE

"To discover for oneself is to discover one's self."

— Sady saying--date unknown

Ivan began to move full of confidence and humor. He whistled as the sunlight that had put Say to sleep began to wake up the forest around him,

The trees that had faded into the background of the night began to come forward while their shapes and colors became outlined against the bluing sky.

"It is good that I have decided to continue my journey," thought Ivan, as the world opened itself more and more in the glare of the sun. He had forgotten that Sady had had more than a little to do with his going on.

As he moved today more gliding along on his new experience than walking or floating, he half-mindedly remembered some of Say's words.

What was it she said about spending time alone thought Ivan trying to get it right. Did she say that to be alone is like fasting for one's spirit while to be too long alone can be hunger for that spirit and more?

He did not understand what she had meant when she had said it, and it made less sense now. It did not matter this morning, for one did not have to think to make this a better day., As the world outside showed itself to him a song from inside him also appeared,

*Sometimes I worry.
Sometimes I fret.
Sometimes I feel in the way,
Sometimes I feel it's all going wrong,
But certainly not today*

Just as he was about to start a new verse to his song, he was stopped in his tracks by a pool of water that the rain had formed upon the ground. It was not large or deep as such things go, but to Ivan it appeared much too large to go around, and he kept the new verse to his song inside him for another day.

He began walking to the water's edge. It was perfectly still at the moment and he saw to his amazement another forest inside the pool. The other forest looked so much like the one he was walking in only it was standing on its head.

"How strange," he thought, "that there are two worlds so close together which look so much alike." together which look so much alike."

As he was thinking this, he reached the edge of the water and looking into it he turned yellow with surprise. He saw someone else also turning yellow looking strangely like Ivan himself and staring back at him. As Ivan moved right the other followed him. If Ivan jumped up so did the other.

Ivan changed from surprised yellow to curious green while he watched the other do the same. Ivan walked away from the water and watched the other disappear. When

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Ivan moved close again and tried to touch the other, the other could not be seen in the softly churning water.

"Another so much like myself in a world so close but which I cannot touch." thought Ivan.

He wished his shadow could talk so he could figure this out with someone else. Ivan began to wonder if he and this other would meet again somewhere. He wondered if they would have seen the same things then, or if perhaps from this moment onward they would choose different paths.

"We shall see," thought Ivan, as he tried to decide how to cross this wet other's world so that he could continue on in his own.

The wind had begun to blow and Ivan noticed that leaves that were floating on the water were moving in the direction he wished to go. Without thinking, for if he had he probably would not have jumped, he leaped upon a leaf that was close to the water's edge. Because he was quite light, the leaf stayed afloat and began taking him to the other side.

"My, oh, my," thought Ivan, "what an adventure!"

It was a quick journey as the wind began to pick up speed and so did the leaf with Ivan on top of it. So fast, indeed, that just as Ivan was ready to make his leap from the leaf to the shore, he was thrown from his makeshift boat. Fortunately Ivan was near enough to land to somehow float the rest of the way. He found out quickly that gliding or walking could not carry him across the water.

Yellow with surprise and a little white with fear, Ivan sputtered to land. Having swallowed a little of the water, Ivan began to uncontrollably giggle and dance. Gnelfs, you see, when they are not in blue sad moods find that a little water makes them giggle and dance about. Some gnelfs of long ago who had swallowed too much water found that they turned deep purple and could not move after so much water. For fear that young gnelfs would learn too much about water's effects it was never talked about in the colonies, and each gnelf either discovered it individually or not at all.

After giggling and dancing until he could giggle no more Ivan fell to the ground and rested before he started off again on his journey. The day was passing quickly, with so many new things to see and do, and Ivan hardly noticed the sun begin to set and the darkness begin to set in.

As the darkness overtook the sun completely, Ivan began to be confused and frightened. Things that had looked so wonderful and exciting in the light of day now alarmed him as they hid themselves more and more in the darkness. The trees, that had climbed all the way to heaven in the daylight, now loomed large in his path, small pools of water (fortunately there would be no more large ones), that had made him giggle and sing, now left him cold and frightened.

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Sady said to keep going thought Ivan cautiously. I wish so she were here. I must keep going.

A keep-going song came to him just then, and he sang it through most of the night.

*One step, one float, one glide, move along.
One step, one float, one glide, move along.
One step, one float, one glide, move along.
Got to keep going till the day turns round.*

So it was that Ivan moved tediously through the night. He thought more of Sady's wise words and wondered why he ever left her. As the sun finally began to climb the sky he felt he could go no further. He was so tired in fact that he didn't notice that he had left the forest for a grassy meadow.

He also didn't hear the voices or remember being carried carefully away. He was sleeping the sleep of one who has traveled as far and long as gnelfly possible.

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