



## **The Fawn and the Fern**

Completed by Katharine Gaillard

*Abigail and her dog, Bliss, were walking through the woods, taking their favorite path, when Abigail's dog started to growl. At first Abigail was frightened that it might be a mountain lion, but under a large fern lay a frightened fawn. Its mother was nowhere to be seen. Abigail knew it was wrong to interfere with wild animals, so she sat on a nearby rock to quietly watch the fawn, and to see if its mother would return. Bliss, however, did not want to sit. Instead, he circled the little deer to keep watch and make sure it would come to no harm. Sadly, the fawn's mother did not return. Abigail tore off some fronds of a fern and wrapped the fawn tightly. Then she picked up the fawn and headed to the . . .*

*– The Dreamstarter Book*

clearing that they had passed earlier on their walk. Abigail's mind was on fire with ideas about the fawn's mother. She started thinking about the positive: maybe her mom had just gone out while the fawn was sleeping to find dinner. But the positive things didn't seem to fit with the information that Abigail knew about fawns. So Abigail started thinking about the more negative things such as what if her mom had left the poor fawn on purpose?

Abigail arrived at the clearing and set the fawn down very carefully. The fawn was awake and seemed as if she could not move. Abigail tried looking at the fawn's legs to see if they were broken or hurt. The fawn would not let her get too close. Whenever she tried to reach out the fawn would try to scoot back. Abigail decided to just sit and observe what the young deer did.

After a while the fawn fell asleep and Abigail decided that she would look at the fawn now, while it was sleeping, and determine what was wrong. Abigail started with the fawn's belly and found nothing there. While looking at the fawn's belly, Bliss went to scope out the area, which Abigail knew he loved to do. As she turned her head she saw something shining in the sun that caught her eye. On the fawn's hind, left foot there was a trap clamped tight. There was a chain that had attached the trap to a pole or something to keep it steady and the chain had been gnawed in half. Abigail was amazed that she had not noticed it before.

The fawn woke up startled when Abigail touched her foot. Abigail reached for the fawn's head to comfort her, but the fawn jolted its head back. Abigail scooted away so the fawn could calm down. She waited and then crawled back over to it and lay down a few feet away. Abigail stayed there for a few minutes and then inched a little closer. Now she could reach the fawn's head. She reached out her hand with the palm up so that the fawn knew that she was not trying to hurt it. The fawn smelled her hand then gave it a lick as if she were saying, "I approve." Abigail stood up slowly and moved to the injured foot. The fawn looked at Abigail with its frightened eyes. Abigail looked back with eyes that read, "It's okay, I am here to help you."

The fawn was still tense, but not as frightened. Abigail stroked its leg very lightly, and she tried to see how she could get the clamp off of the fawn's foot. She would have to pull on the two sides of the trap that tightly held the foot. She knew this would be difficult. Abigail decided to keep stroking the fawn's foot until she was ready to undo the trap. When she was ready, she got a good grip on the two sides and pulled. Abigail felt the trap give way a little but it still held fast. Being not the strongest of the bunch, Abigail gave up and let go. The fawn looked up at Abigail with pain in her eyes, begging Abigail to get the clamp off of its foot. Abigail was filled with hope and courage by looking in the fawn's eyes. Abigail decided that she was going to try to dismantle the clamp since it was so rusty and tight. Finding a random piece of metal, she started to pry the two sides apart. Since Abigail's head was so close to the fawn's foot she could smell a very strong, old and rusty smell. The trap must have either been on the fawn for a long time or been laying on the ground for a long time. Abigail had been working for a good ten minutes when she finally got the clamp off.

The fawn was finally free! But, her foot would take a while to heal. Abigail told the fawn to stay and she went a few feet away to get something to use as a bandage. Abigail found some soft leaves and tenderly wrapped the fawn's foot. As she was wrapping the foot she was thinking of a name for the fawn. She chose Nalani. She had learned it in school, since they were studying Hawaii, that this name means the heavens. It was the perfect name for the fawn since Nalani is so beautiful with her spotted back, white belly, and chestnut body.

Abigail put the leaves around Nalani's foot. The fawn looked up at her with grateful yet pain filled eyes. Now that Nalani had a bandage on her foot, Abigail wanted to see if she could stand. Abigail put her hands carefully under the fawn's belly and tried to pick her up. Nalani tried to stand, but was a little hesitant. "She is probably scared that it will hurt her foot even more," thought Abigail, "I wonder where Bliss is I hope he didn't get lost, well he can smell his way back!"

All of a sudden Bliss, came out of nowhere barking like crazy! Abigail and Nalani were very frightened because they had no idea what was going on. Then Abigail heard two men talking to each other:

"I know I set the trap here somewhere, but it isn't here anymore."

"Well, we need to find it or we won't have any deer skin to make that rug for Mrs. Bassie!"

Abigail picked up Nalani, motioned for Bliss to join, and ran as if her life depended on it. Abigail didn't know where she was going or how far away the poachers were. She hoped they couldn't see her or they had stopped in the clearing.

Abigail had been running for a long time when she finally stopped at a cottage near the edge of the woods. She knocked on the door, pushed through when it opened and started to tell the old woman who had opened the door her story. As Abigail was telling the story she put Nalani down on a soft carpet. Once she was finally done the old woman told Abigail what she knew about the poachers.

"I saw them at around noon. They came by to ask how many deer lived in the woods, I told them that there was a fair amount. Then I saw their guns and told them it wasn't hunting season, they pretended to not hear me and left. At around sunset I heard shot guns go off. Very frightened, I decided to ignore it and call the cops if it happened again."

"Maybe when the shot guns went off the poachers shot Nalani's mother and she got stuck in the trap! We should call the cops and see if they can track the hunters down!"

"I will go call them right now." The old woman dialed the number.

“Hello, I live in the Hampton woods and would like to report some poachers that shot a deer off season and, also set a trap that a fawn got stuck in.” The old woman listened to the policeman.

“My name is Lisa Gally. Thank you, goodbye.” She hung up the phone. “They are going to send out animal control.”

“I hope they find those mean people who would kill Nalani’s mother.”

Two days after this incident happened the police found the poachers and they also had the animal control help Abigail heal Nalani.

“Now Nalani can be free to roam the wild!” said the doctor who was taking care of Nalani with Abigail.

Once Abigail went through this experience she learned that she wants to be a vet when she grows up, or a part of the animal control group.