

Katie-Lee and the Monster Trees

Chapter 7 - July - Hot Time

It was July and the day was hot and sultry. Katie-Lee was splashing about in her paddling pool.

'Getting wet is a good way to keep cool,' said Mum, 'I think we'll give Bella a hosing down today before we go for our walk and then she won't get so hot.'

'Dogs do not really like very hot weather.' she went on. 'Imagine how you would feel if you had to wear a thick fur coat in this weather!'

Bella was sitting in the shade panting. This weather really was a bit too warm for her.

Mum turned on the hose and Bella ran eagerly under the shower. Not all dogs like water but Labradors, like Bella, were originally bred to help the fishermen of Labrador bring in their nets from the sea - so they love it!

'Right Katie-Lee, put your trainers on and we'll go for our walk,' said Mum.

Mum and Katie-Lee both knew that even on the hottest days it was not a very good idea to go walking in the woods wearing sandals. The ground was rough with lots of sticks and prickles so trainers were much more practical.

'We should also take some bottles of water with us today in case we all feel thirsty,' said Mum. 'Here put this one in your back pack.'

It was hot work walking up the hill to the gate but once they were in the woods under the shade of the trees it was nice and cool.

'I think we will stay in the woods today out of the sun and not go into the fields,' said Mum. Let's see what trees we can recognise.'

'I know what Oak leaves look like,' said Katie-Lee. 'They are sort of wavy around the edge.'

'Yes, they are,' said Mum, 'and most of the trees in this part of the wood are Oak trees. If you look at the bark on the trunks you will see that it is full of cracks and ridges. That is another way to recognise Oak trees,' she explained.

Mum and Katie-Lee collected lots of leaves of all sorts of shapes. There was just one other that Katie-Lee recognised.

"Felicity showed me one of those!" she cried, 'it's a Sycamore leaf!'

As they walked up the path toward the Monster Trees, Katie-Lee noticed that their leaves were quite different.

'They look more like Christmas tree leaves, don't they Mum?' she said.

"Yes, you are quite right!' Mum told her. 'These Yews are evergreen trees which means that their leaves do not fall off in the autumn but stay green all year round.'

'I wonder if it is cooler under the Monster Trees?' mused Katie-Lee as she ducked under the spreading branches.

There was a strange huffing noise. It sounded just like Bella panting and Katie-Lee thought for a moment that the dog had followed her. But when she looked round she saw that the magic had happened again and she was in the little round house belonging to Sobersides.

He was sitting on a strange carved wooden chair with his head in his hands - and panting hard just like a dog that had been running.

'Hello Sobersides,' exclaimed Katie-Lee. 'You don't look very well - are you all right?'

'Oooo, I'm soooo hot!!!' moaned the monster.

Katie-Lee could see that Sobersides would have exactly the same problem as a dog in hot weather as he too was covered in a thick coat of fur. She wondered how she could help him and suddenly she remembered what Mum had done with Bella.

"I know what to do to cool you down!" she exclaimed and she pulled off her back-pack and took out the bottle of water.

"Keep still while I pour this over your fur. That should make you feel much better."

Katie-Lee splashed the water all over Sobersides' head and shoulders. He started to feel cooler straight away and rubbed his hands in the wet fur and then over his face.

'Oh that is lovely,' he said. 'Why didn't I think of that? I feel so much better now.'

Suddenly someone shouted, 'Cooeee!' Katie-Lee looked round and there was Felicity!

'I just came to see how my neighbour was coping with all this heat,' she said.

'I had been very miserable,' said Sobersides, 'but my friend Katie-Lee has worked her magic again and made me feel much better by wetting my fur - look!'

'Oh yes, Ducks, that is a very good way to get cool,' said Felicity. 'As the water dries it takes heat away from your body. And you can make it happen faster if you use one of these.'

Felicity held out a little fan. It was simply made by folding a piece of paper concertina-wise but as she waved it about Katie-Lee could feel the air swishing past her.

Felicity stood close to Sobersides and waved the fan over his wet shoulders.

"Ooo that feels wonderful,' exclaimed the monster. 'Let me do it!'
He took it and fanned himself with a huge smile on his face.

'Let me show you how to make one for yourself Sweetie-Pie,' said Felicity and she gave Katie-Lee a sheet of pink paper.

'First you fold over about 1 centimetre along the edge and press it down hard to make a sharp crease.' Felicity told her.

'Next, Sugar-Plum, you fold it back the other way the same distance to make a zigzag. And then you keep folding backwards and forwards until you have made a concertina out of the whole sheet.'

With Felicity helping Katie-Lee quickly got the hang of it and she had soon made her paper into a thin, folded strip.

'Now then, Lovey-Dove, you fold the strip in half and allow it to spread out into a fan shape.' said Felicity. 'If you want you can stick the edges together with glue or fasten them with a staple.'

Katie-Lee held the closed end of the fan and waved it backwards and forwards. It made a gentle breeze.

'Is it lovely and cool in there?' asked Mum as she ducked under the branches.

As soon as she did so, Felicity, Sobersides and the little house all disappeared leaving Katie-Lee standing alone holding her water bottle in one hand and a the folded pink paper in the other.

'Oh dear, did you spill the water?' asked Mum when she saw the empty bottle.

'No, I didn't spill it' replied Katie-Lee. 'I poured it onto Sobersides' fur to help keep him cool, like Bella.'

'And look what I made,' she added showing Mum the little fan. 'Felicity taught me how to do it.'

'It's amazing how much litter she manages to find under there,' Mum thought to herself - but when she looked at the fan she could se that it was quite pretty.

When they got home Katie-Lee found some paper and made a fan for Mum and another for Dad.

'Tomorrow, at school, I'll show everyone how to make fans!' she decided.
