

Ghost Forest – Summary

Introduction

The story starts in the room of the red-haired Anne – a girl of nine who lives together with her mother. Anne is kind of a difficult child. A lot of broken toys cover the room, her mother hardly manages to control her.

There is a visitor ringing at the door: an old gentleman comes to the house. Soon it becomes clear that **Mr. Nerod Laptsev** has a very unusual job – he is **preserver of endangered toys** (or “toy salvager”, as he prefers to call himself). Mother and daughter get completely enchanted by the game he shows them. It is a model landscape built in extreme detail, and its most fascinating feature is that it looks alive. Completely bound, little Anne insists on getting the game at any price. The old man agrees to lend it to her for a few days and then goes away, wishing Anne ... strength. Why? We don't know yet.

Anne plays day and night with the new game. A few days later a disaster happens: it suddenly stops functioning, all efforts to repair it come to nothing. Blinded by anger the girl takes a heavy hammer and gives the “nasty thing” a heavy blast.

Suddenly the game starts to glow and out of its middle a small tornado appears. In front of our eyes the girl is being sucked into the magic world of the game.

Part one: Lost

Anne falls down into the middle of a meadow in the forest. Her old backpack follows her.

Here she meets the first inhabitants of the forest: an old clock named Quirky and his constant companion Boo (a strange flying creature whose wings are actually ... two giant ears). They start joking with her and explain that she has come to “the most scary forest in the world”. Besides, they warn her that there are ghosts here and she should avoid them at any price. Stubborn and unfriendly, Anne annoys the two fellows and they fly away.

After a lot of difficulties Anne succeeds in getting away from the meadow. In a water mill near the river she meets Grandpa Hedgehog – the old herbs master of the forest. Usually he would love to help anybody but now he is too busy with his own problems: for some reason the wheel of the mill has stopped turning and now his garden is slowly drying out.

Left alone and without help, Anne climbs on top of the wheel and immediately discovers the reason for the malfunction: a family of fat beavers has built their nest there, thus blocking the machinery. It turns out Anne has the honor of meeting in person Mr. Heino, the malevolent robber-baron who charges everybody in the forest for the right to move from a place to another.

At first Anne is rather frightened by this encounter but soon she finds out how to outsmart Heino and drive him away from the place.

Grandpa Hedgehog is moved to tears. As a sign of his thankfulness he gives Anne his most valuable possession: a magic ... Oh, sorry, we don't want to spoil everything by telling too much of the story here.

Many and many adventures later, Anne manages to get through all obstacles on this side of the river (which are really very, very difficult to overcome). Finally she arrives at Madame Owl's, the old fortune-teller Grandpa Hedgehog has sent her to.

Yes, she does become some help from the old bird, but it is rather vague. The one thing clear is that she can find answers to all her questions only at the Ghost Mansion – the place where the ghosts live. Anne is scared to death ...

Part two – In the land Antazonia

Near the river Anne discovers a big anthill. To her most unpleasant surprise, after a surprising turn of the events she gets arrested by the ants. It turns out that in the anthill there rules a dictatorial regime. A small group of ants-warriors keeps the great mass of black ants-workers under a strict rule, using them as cheap labor force. What is worse, many of the black ants do not have even the slightest idea of their real situation. All attempts of little Anne to convince them that there is a better world outside come to nothing. All they are interested in is watching TV, and the only answer Anne gets is “if there would have been such a world, we would have seen it on TV already”.

Many and many adventures later, Anne has finally managed to get to the side of the river where the Ghost Mansion is.

But it is still a long way there. She hardly manages to make a few steps when a big predator attacks her from above ... Anne has just become pray for one of the most frightening hunters in the Enchanted Forest: the great Eagle.

Part three – In the Eagle’s Nest

The eagle brings her into his nest where she will serve as breakfast to his children. It turns out that the two eagle chicks are crazy about puzzles and riddles of any kind. Anne invites them to a riddle contest and succeeds to outsmart them (but don't think this is much too easy). Impressed, they offer her a deal: she can stay with them as a favorite toy.

The series of tasks and puzzles Anne has to solve until she gets completely free is far too complicated to be discussed here. Let us only say that she manages to get rid of the chicks and escape from the nest.

But the difficulties are far from over. She finally comes back to the forest and descends again on the riverbank where the Ghost Mansion is.

Part four – The Ghost Mansion

Getting into that mansion is not easy at all. Anne has to solve again lots of problems and avoid many traps. After a few more adventures she finally manages to disguise so thoroughly that the ghosts do not recognize her. And here comes a very, very bad surprise for her: after a long conversation with them she manages to finally find out their secret.

Of course we are not going to reveal the secret here. We will only say that it thoroughly shocks little Anne. Moreover, it turns out that her role in the whole story is much more important than she has ever thought ...

After many difficulties the girl manages to solve all puzzles of the forest and get through all difficulties until the (unavoidable) happy end comes.

Epilogue

Anne is home again. Old Mr. Laptsev has just come to get the borrowed game back. The mother cannot help telling him again and again about the deep impact it must have had on her daughter – there is no trace of the spoiled kid from the beginning, Anne is almost a grown-up person now.

But ... Another surprise expects us at the end of the story. Is it really over? You rather don't bet!