

Officer Savard turned to the reporter. "Ms. Wong, please. You're just encouraging these people."

"We're covering the news," she said indignantly. "It's our job."

Officer Savard waved her off. Then he turned to my father. "Your daughter's going to be in a lot of trouble if she doesn't get down from that tree. She was part of an illegal protest on the road. She ran away from us. Now I've ordered her to get down from the tree, but she won't leave. That's breaking the law again. She might have to go to jail."

"Gail, did you hear that?" asked my father. "You get down here!"

I was scared. But I couldn't let the forest be cut down. I shouted back, "I'm staying here."

My father sounded frustrated. "You're going to ruin your life. For what? A tree?"

I shook my head. "I'm trying to save a forest."

"What are you going to do, spend the night in that tree?" he asked.

"I'll spend a year here if I have to."

Dad threw up his arms in disbelief. "That's crazy! Gail, staying up there isn't going to stop us. We'll just rope off an area around your tree and cut down everything else."

Mr. Wakes snapped at him, "Don't tell her our plans."

"She's got to see how hopeless it is," replied my father. "Then she'll come down."

He turned to me again, his voice sounding desperate. "Gail, the company's going to lock down this whole valley. They're

going to put a gate on the logging road to stop anyone but company men from getting up here. They're going to put security guards around this tree. Then they're going to wait until you're so hungry that you come down by yourself. Then they're going to take you to the police. So, why not give up now? The police will go easier on you."

Officer Savard waved me down. "That's right. If you come down now, we'll drop some charges against you."

Dad stood beside him, nodding in agreement, and waving me down, too.

My decision seemed very clear. I took a deep breath. "I'm going to stay here as long as I can. Even if you start cutting down other trees, I'm still slowing you down. And as long as I'm in Magic, I can save this tree."

Hearing that, Dad stood there shaking his head. It seemed like he didn't know what else to say.

Neddie Wakes stepped closer to the tree. "You should listen to your father. It's crazy to spend the night here."

I ignored Mr. Wakes. When he saw that, he tried a different approach.

"This is bear country," he began. "Every year they attack people. Have you thought of that, Gail?"

I couldn't believe it. Mr. Wakes was trying to scare me with bears! The black bears in this forest are as frightened of people as we are of them. Whenever Shane and I walked in the forest, we made noise to avoid surprising a bear and frightening it into charging at us. Whenever we went camping, we put the food outside our tent in a bag. Then we hung the bag from a tree branch, high enough to be out of reach for any bear. If bears become accustomed to eating people's food, even their garbage, they become dangerous.