

When I was a little girl I knew in my heart what it was like to *be* all the animals that have ever lived, even those that are extinct or mythical. I know how they think and feel and smell. I plan to be a writer and vet in the future. When I was younger I wrote the first draft of this story - it's sort of about me. Jessamie, age 9.

## AnAmelia

Not so long, long ago, there was a little girl called Amelia. She lived on a hill with her elder sister Esther. Their cottage was cramped but Amelia loved it because she always had an excuse to go outside on their farm and feed all their pigs, horses, cows, chickens, ducks and sheep. And of course Henry the dog. Amelia didn't think of this as chores. Amelia loved animals! Her sister, however, DID NOT!

Amelia liked to roll in mud and grunt with the pigs, Esther thought they were disgusting. Amelia whistled to the birds, her sister would scare them away. Amelia helped injured bees, her sister squashed them.

But despite her loathing for animals, Esther loved her little sister (though she was more animal than human) and with all her heart she wanted to keep her safe.

One Sunday afternoon Amelia wandered into the forest to meet her animal friends. Well, that's what she said she was doing, but really she was gathering flowers for her sister's birthday. Strolling back through the sunlit forest, she noticed the beautiful sunset and how it filtered through the trees.

*I best be getting home - it will soon be dark.* She thought.

All of a sudden, she heard a noise behind her. She turned to see two little squirrels foraging for nuts and berries. She played with them and got carried away as the sky grew dark. She started eating nuts and

berries too, because she was very hungry. She hadn't realised that the squirrels were avoiding the magic berries...

*Snap!*

A twig startled her. She realised she couldn't find her way home on account of nightfall - oh no! The trees started whispering to her, muttering and murmuring under their leaves.

*"Run! Ruuun!"*

She noticed the squirrels scurrying away. They chattered as they ran and Amelia tried to keep up. Her trouser leg snagged on a tree root and she tripped, banging her head on the way down.

When she awoke she knew that what her sister called her 'impossible' dream had come true. For when she looked down, her body was covered in fur, her fingers were tipped with claws and her vision was clear as day, in the black of the night wood.

Of course, now she found her way home easily - but what would her sister say? She was particularly terrified of nocturnal animals!

But when her sister looked into her eyes she connected to an animal for the first time in her life and hugged her furry little sister close. "I always knew you were wild - AnAmelia!"