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# Christopher Robin

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## Christopher Robin

To my very own Jameson Milne, who reminds me every day of the power that lies in imagination



## **AUTHOR'S NOTE**



A s a child, I spent many afternoons lost in the Hundred-Acre Wood, caught up in adventures with a silly old bear named Pooh and his best friend, Christopher Robin. The world of the wood was as real to me as my own backyard. I could picture Pooh's home, with its large armoire full of honey pots, and felt as though I, myself, had knocked on Piglet's door on many occasions. I loved Eeyore, with his droopy eyes and pessimistic view on life (though at the time, I had no idea what

pessimistic meant). I just thought it was rather funny that the donkey could never see how much he was loved or how great things were (a lesson I remind myself of often in my older age) and wanted a hug from Kanga and to bounce along with Roo and Tigger.

Rabbit and Owl, with their more serious natures and understanding of the larger world, always intimidated me to a degree but became the characters I saw most in the adult figures in my life. The Hundred-Acre Wood was a wonderful place to spend my time — and generations of children before and after me have also lost themselves among the woods and its hodgepodge of animals. What child hasn't, at some point or another, believed in that innocent, wholehearted way that the stuffed animals they loved the most could come to life and be their companions on adventures, that they could provide comfort when faced with the inevitable sad or frightening moments of life.

Pooh was that hope come true — and even now, I believe in him and what he represented.

I believe in the silly old bear who could, in his simple way, always find the silver lining and bring the world to right when it got knocked off-kilter. As Pooh himself so wisely said, "Life is a journey to be experienced, not a problem to be solved." Enjoy the adventure!

—E. Rudnick

"You can't stay in your corner of the forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes."

-A. A. MILNE



### **PROLOGUE**



IN WHICH CHRISTOPHER ROBIN

AND POOH COME TO AN ENCHANTED PLACE

AND WE LEAVE THEM THERE

I t was, as it most usually was, a beautiful day in the Hundred-Acre Wood. The sky was blue, unblemished by clouds. The air was sweet, touched by the hint of honey that wafted from a familiar bear's pot, and a gentle breeze kissed the cheeks of the friends who had gathered around a picnic table. But while the setting was idyllic and lent itself to happy thoughts,

the expressions on the faces of the friends were rather, well, sad.

Looking around the table, Winnie the Pooh tried to ignore the rumbling, grumbling sound coming from his tummy. He wasn't positive, but he had a feeling that now was not the time to mention he was hungry, even if they were at a picnic table — which, in his experience, was usually a place people picnicked. And picnics usually involved food. His tummy grumbled again.

"We all know why we're here."



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Rabbit's serious voice brought a quick stop to thoughts of food. Pooh looked over and watched as Rabbit walked to the head of the picnic table. "I have asked my friend Eeyore" — he paused and nodded in the direction of the grey donkey, whose head was hanging down, as usual — "I have asked him to propose a rissolution."

Pooh cocked his head. *Rissolution*? He did not like when Rabbit used such big words. He opened his mouth to ask what a rissolution was, but before he could, Eeyore lumbered over to stand by Rabbit. He placed a piece of paper in the middle of the table and then proceeded to straighten it out — for a very long time. Finally, he cleared his throat and began to read: "Christopher Robin is going," he said, his voice slow and deep and, as usual, devoid of any happiness. "At least, I think he is. Where? Nobody knows. But he is going." Eeyore paused and his heavy brows furrowed as he looked over the words on the page. "I mean, 'he goes,'" he corrected himself. Then he went on.

"'Do we care? We do. Very much. Anyhow, we send our love. The end."

The sullen donkey stopped speaking and slowly lifted his head from the paper. The other animals were silent. Pooh was looking beyond him at the large banner they had hung above the picnic table. The words fairwell christopher robem were written across it — not quite straight — in a mishmash of colors. Eeyore let out a long, slow sigh. "If anyone wants to clap," he said finally, with little enthusiasm in his voice, "now is the time to do it."

As if on cue, Christopher Robin himself walked into the clearing.

"That's a lovely poem, Eeyore," he said in a kind voice. The seven-year-old had been hanging back at the edge of the clearing until Eeyore had finished. Now he brushed back his auburn bangs, which had grown long and shaggy over the summer months, and looked around at all his friends. He felt a lump in his throat. He loved the odd collection of animals more than anything in the world. He loved sweet, innocent Piglet, with his squeaky voice and fear of, well, everything. There was Kanga and her joey, Roo, and Tigger, who, even during this somber occasion, couldn't stop moving. Owl and Rabbit had remained serious the entire time, while Eeyore had managed to make the going-away poem sound even sadder than it was supposed to be.

And of course, there was his best friend, Winnie the Pooh. He was going to miss them all so much. They had spent so many long days together, playing in the woods behind his family's house. Without them around, the summer would have been painfully slow — and painfully lonely. Mother and Father were not exactly fun playmates.

Knowing that the others were looking at him intently, eager to see if he liked his banner and poem, Christopher tried hard to smile. But he could tell that the others knew he was sad. Especially Pooh.

"It's just too bad it's over," the bear said, pulling his red shirt down over his belly. "I would have liked it to go for a while longer."

With a nod of agreement, Christopher Robin walked over to the picnic table. His shirt and shorts, which had fit at the beginning of the summer, were now too small — and he found himself pulling them down in a similar fashion to how Pooh tugged on his clothes. (Although Christopher knew that Pooh's reason for a tight shirt wasn't so much growing *up* as growing rounder from the abundant honey he ate.)

Jumping up onto the picnic table so he was closer in height to Christopher Robin, Piglet approached the boy. Even now, after countless hours of playing and adventuring together, the small pig seemed nervous. Christopher Robin tried not to smile as Piglet, whose expression was far too big and serious for such a tiny creature, held out a small bag. "I m-made you this sack of Hundred-Acre Wood haycorns," he stammered. "They are my very f-f-favorite snack. Wherever you may go, they will remind you of the Hundred-Acre Wood."



Christopher Robin took the haycorns solemnly. "Thank you, Piglet," he said. The little creature nodded but didn't take his eyes off the sack of haycorns. "Would you like one?" Christopher added, noting the hungry way Piglet was eving the treats. To his credit, Piglet shook his head. But his eyes stayed fixated on the bag. "Well, I don't think I'll need any help remembering, but I shall treasure them always," Christopher finally said, giving Piglet another sincere thank-you. He was trying desperately to stay happy, but seeing how sad his friends were and the trouble they had gone to to give him a farewell picnic just made Christopher even sadder than he had been when he had woken that morning.

The minutes leading up to when he had entered the wood that day had been utterly miserable. His mother had insisted he pack before he could play. Then she had told him to clean out the nursery and put his "baby" toys away, as he wouldn't need them now that he was a big boy attending big-boy boarding school. Despite a lengthy, and in his mind well-argued protest about the importance of keeping things as reminders, Mother wouldn't change her mind. So that had meant more time inside, sorting and putting things in storage. He hadn't even been able to enjoy his last lunch, even though it was his favorite — a peanut butter, banana, and honey sandwich because Father had arrived with the car right in the middle and had started packing up all their luggage. There had been one brief moment when Christopher was sure they were going to leave before he could escape to the woods, but then, thankfully, Father had been distracted, pulled away to fix a broken pipe. Christopher had taken his chance and slipped away.

Arriving in the wood, he had hoped to get a break from the sadness he felt; but instead he found himself saying good-bye and feeling all the weepier by the moment.

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