

The Pandaroo

A Sew Powerful Parable by Dana Buck

Once there was a magic isle
A place of awe and wonder
Where sandy beaches line the shore
And waves display their thunder

The trees were tall and leafy green
With grassy glades between
And waterfalls ran down the hills
To become clear, lazy streams

But it's not the beauty of this place
That makes the island special
It's the animals that call it home
That burrow, graze or nestle

For every mammal, every bird
All species 'ere created
Each reptile and amphibian
Were on this isle located

Here life abundant knows no bounds
In all its mass and motion
Featuring feathers, fur and scales
Like an ark upon the ocean

And of all the creatures living here
That ran or crawled or flew
None was more peculiar than
The unlikely Pandaroo

His upper half was Chinese bear
And through what seemed genetic blunder
His lower half was distinctly like
A marsupial from down under

His challenges were many
To accomplish daily living
For his body parts seemed quite mismatched
Ill-suited and unforgiving

When it came to motion
He did the best that he could do
Not moving like a normal bear
He bounced like a kangaroo

But his head and shoulders, arms and chest
Were large and much too brawny
Nothing like a kangaroo's
More thin and light and scrawny

So when he'd lean to get a start
To make his way by hopping
The challenge wasn't getting there
The challenge was somehow stopping

When he reached his chosen spot
There simply were no breaks
And so he'd stop by bouncing into
Bushes, trees and lakes

And eating was another chore
That surely was no breeze
For the leaves he loved were only found
High in the eucalyptus trees

Can you imagine climbing high
As surely you must do
To reach these tender, budding leaves
With the feet of a kangaroo?

His greatest trial was fitting in
Feeling accepted anywhere
He was only partial kangaroo
And not completely panda bear

He'd gather with the other roos
To lie beneath the trees
But conscious of his panda parts
He felt odd and ill at ease

Likewise with the panda bears
He only had himself to blame
For he could never seem to look beyond
All the ways they weren't the same

So more and more, all by himself
In loneliness he'd sit
And think about the countless ways
He didn't seem to fit

One day as he was feeling blue
The forest's quiet hush
Was broken by a crashing sound
Within the underbrush

Unsettled by this sudden noise
The Pandaroo just froze
And sat staring at the tree line
Where the clamoring arose

He heard somebody singing
Just as loudly as they could
The words were bright and happy
As they echoed through the woods

“I may not be a peacock”
“Or a lion with regal mane”
“But I follow the Creator”
“And he loves me just the same”

“Whether cloaked in neon feathers”
“Or fur as fine as it can be”
“I’m always going to love”
“The Great Creator ‘cross the sea!”

Then bursting through the bushes
Came a creature on the scene
The most frightening and funny
The Pandaroo had ever seen

For its head was large and wooly
With curving horns and shaggy beard
But below its massive shoulders
Was where this animal got weird

For his legs were thin and spindly
Not much thicker than a rope
He turned to face the Pandaroo
“Hello, I’m the Buffalope”

The Pandaroo was much confused
By the upper and lower half
He wasn’t sure if he should run
Or stay or cry or laugh

But the Buffalo just stood and smiled
He'd seen this all before
The startled, disbelieving looks
That everybody wore

"I hope I'm not disturbing you"
"I kind of lost my way"
The Buffalo, congenial
And polite began to say

"I thought I'd found a hidden trail"
"A short cut to the glade"
"But before I knew what happened"
Well, it seems I must have strayed"

"No worries" said the Pandaroo
Feeling more at ease
"Why I, myself, occasionally"
"Bump into brush and trees"

The Buffalo gave a chuckle
In his booming baritone
"Say, I'm wondering why you're sitting
"In this forest all alone?"

"Well, by now you may have noticed"
"I'm not quite a normal bear"
"And I'm also not a kangaroo"
"I'm neither here nor there"

"I feel so darn self-conscience"
"Feel it everywhere I go"
"Either the top of me is misfit"
"Or my legs and feet below"

“So I find a patch of forest”
“That’s concealed and out of sight”
“Here I don’t feel quite so badly”
“Like a failure or a blight”

The Pandaroo then dropped his head
His chin upon his chest
“I just wish I could be the same”
“Yes be like all the rest”

The silence fell between them
Till the Buffalope remarked
“Well, you may have noticed normal’s”
“Not exactly where I’m parked”

“I know the hurt you’re feeling”
“The unfairness that’s conferred”
“I see Buffalo and antelope”
“And don’t belong to either herd”

“But there’s something rare and special”
“Something only you can be”
“In the plan designed and driven”
“By the Creator ‘cross the sea”

“For He knows us from the inside out”
“All our dreams and tears and aches”
“He leaves nothing void and empty”
“And he never makes mistakes”

“It’s up to us to simply trust him”
“To find our purpose in His plan”
“When we do, that’s when we’re joyful”
“And really feel His loving hand”

“As for me, I’ve learned to follow”
“Seek the path he has arranged”
“On the outside nothing’s different”
“Yet somehow everything is changed”

The Buffalope moved closer
With some mischief in his eyes
“Besides, I’ll never have to worry”
“Bout being called old thunder thighs”

The Pandaroo raised up his head
And laughed until he cried
The Buffalope just grinned
And pawed the ground as sadness died

And when his laughing faded
The Pandaroo quick wiped his eyes
And decided then and there
To put away his sorry “whys”

“I have to really thank you”
“For your words sweet and selective
“You’ve helped improve my outlook”
“With a healthy new perspective”

“I never did consider”
“That my curse was really wealth”
“I guess I was too busy”
“Feeling sorry for myself”

“Instead of all this moping”
“Hiding out in isolation”
“I think I’ll hop along”
“And find my place in His creation”

“Now you’re talking partner”
The Buffalope saw glumness fade
“Well, I’d better mosey on”
“And try to find that sunny glade”

“As for you, stay on the pathway”
“And if you find somebody blue”
“Just share what you’ve been given”
“So they can walk the pathway too”

And with that the shaggy bison
Legs like sticks of peppermint
Proceeded on his way
Singing loudly as he went

“Oh I’ll never be a rhino”
“Or a great big tall giraffe”
“But I can act with kindness”
“Find new friends and make them laugh”

“So if you’re feeling gloomy”
Sing and make the sadness flee”
“And always seek to praise”
“The Great Creator ‘cross the sea”

The Pandaroo then waved goodbye
Glad for the smile he wears
Bouncing off to find the kangaroos
And locate the panda bears

The roos were napping in the shade
When the Pandaroo came hopping
In his excitement he forgot about
His deficiencies in stopping

He hooked two saplings with his arms
He twisted and he bent them
Desperate to decrease his speed
And halt his great momentum

Then grabbing one with both his paws
He circled round and round
Till gravity took over
And he settled on the ground

Then sheepishly he looked
To the reclining kangaroos
Not one was meanly laughing
(Although they did seem quite amused)

They asked if he was injured
With a caring, patient essence
One kangaroo spoke up
And even offered stopping lessons

The Pandaroo then saw
His former thoughts of fear and dread
Were woefully misplaced
And existed mostly in his head

He then enjoyed a quiet nap
With his friends the kangaroos
Then went off in search of pandas
And their friendship to peruse

As he crossed the sunny island
Towards the eucalyptus trees
He could hear the sounds of turmoil
Floating in upon the breeze

When he bounced into the meadow
Where the pandas like to sit
The bears were pacing tensely
As one mother threw a fit

He achieved a sliding halt and
Heard the mother crying "please!"
As she pointed in her panic
High into the swaying trees

The sight where aimed her finger
Caused the Pandaroo to blanch
For there above the meadow
A baby panda clutched a branch

"I only left him for a second"
"And he climbed out on that limb"
"It's too thin and weak to hold me"
"So I couldn't get to him"

"I tried and tried to coax him"
"But he wouldn't come to me"
"Oh can't someone be a hero"
"And bring my baby down to me?"

The other pandas stood in quandary
None desired her plea to snub
But all were far too heavy
For that branch that held the cub

They milled and paced and fretted
Not comprehending what to do
Till one voice broke through the din
"I'll save him" cried the Pandaroo

All eyes are fixed upon him
And their gaze he bravely meets
But no panda sees his face
'Cause they're all looking at his feet

With all the looks of doubt and worry
His bravery starts to melt away
Then he thinks about the Buffalo
And what he had to say

So he trusts the Great Creator
And gives his all, yes every ounce
With a cry of "cowabunga!"
The Pandaroo begins to bounce

With each leap he carries higher
Jumping up like a machine
Back to earth, then springing skyward
Just like a panda trampoline

He strained his every muscle
Bouncing heedless to the breach
But even with his mighty effort
The cub remained just out of reach

He felt his vigor failing
As his legs began to burn
He could fathom just one option
Just one place that he could turn

"Oh Great Creator 'cross the sea"
As to the ground he quick descended
"On the opinions of all others"
"For my worth I have depended"

“Please forgive that foolish notion”
“Make my heart and spirit new”
“Give me strength to do the thing”
“That you created me to do!”

With that prayer he hit the meadow
And his legs coiled like a spring
He then launched himself and aimed
Up where the baby waits and clings

And in a pose like Superman
He stretched his arms for all their worth
And deftly plucked the little panda
From his lofty tree top perch

To the ground they both did plummet
And to keep the cub from harm
The Pandaroo safe wrapped the baby
In his own great panda arms

His landing was impeccable
And as cheering filled his ears
He restored the cub and mother
Midst her hugs and smiles and tears

Hoisted up on panda shoulders
And then carried round the glade
The Pandaroo felt like a hero
In this joyful bear parade

Then he thought about the Buffalo
Where he aimed his thanks and praise
The attitude and point of view
That filled his happy days

So in the midst of celebration
He rallied up this cheering throng
And singing with one voice
He taught them all this little song

“Though the day be fraught with peril”
“Filled with trouble near and far”
“We can trust the one who loves us best”
“No matter who we are”

“So whether napping in the sun”
“Or dangling high up in a tree”
“Just lift your voice and praise”
“The Great Creator ‘cross the sea”

From that day throughout his lifetime
The Pandaroo had many pals
Not just kangaroos and pandas
But also otters, wolves and owls

But of all the friends he’d made
Amongst the deer and gulls and squid
He loved the misfits best
The ones who felt like he once did

For he remembered what the Buffalo
Had said that he should do
“Always share what you’ve been given”
“So they can walk the pathway too”

And so this sunny day
He sought someone he’d heard about
A quiet, lonely creature
Who seemed lost in fear and doubt

He found a distant bit of forest
Quite off the beaten track
Where sat a little monkey
Wrapped in stripes of white and black

“Hello” he called with gusto
“I’m Pandaroo” he said with zing
That’s how he met the Chimpanzeebra
And then taught him how to sing