

## Chapter One

The path was wide; the grass grew high on either side. It was the path Arielle followed with her dog, Britches, when they went to their secret place in the woods. Arielle discovered this place quite by accident one summer day a few years previous. Arielle and Britches were on an adventure that summer day, in the meadow behind Arielle's house. It was a beautiful meadow with high grasses and trees scattered about. Arielle decided to lie in the tall grass, as she looked up at the bright-blue sky and watched the large, puffy white clouds pass by.

But Britches got bored very quickly and decided to go on an adventure of his own. He ran through the grass, not knowing where he was going. He was simply enjoying his romp, barking as he went, when all of a sudden he came to a path. "Arielle, over here," he yelled.

Arielle was still lying in the tall grass, relaxing, watching the clouds. "What is it, Britches?" she yelled.

"A path. Come see for yourself!" he exclaimed.

Arielle's curiosity got the best of her. She stood up and looked for Britches but couldn't see him. "Where are you, Britches?"

"Over here," he yelled. Then he began to bark loudly.

Arielle ran through the high grass, which reached to her hips. "Keep barking, Britches, I don't see you."

Britches barked loudly as Arielle made her way closer to the path. Finally she could see the black and white fur on the top of his head. When she reached the path, she knelt down next to him and said, "I wonder where it leads."

"I don't know," he replied, "but I'm curious. Want to follow it?"

"OK, but you lead the way." Britches ran down the path as fast as he could leaving Arielle far behind. "Not so fast, Britches. I can't run that fast," she yelled.

Arielle could see that the path led straight into the woods. She wasn't sure if she wanted to venture that far. "I don't know if I should go into the woods!" exclaimed Arielle.

Britches stopped and looked back. "Are you a chicken?"

"No, I'm just not sure if I should go into the woods by myself."

"You're not going into the woods by yourself," he replied.

"I'm going in with you."

Arielle thought, *Britches is right. I'm not going into the woods by myself if he is with me.* Then she ran quickly and caught up with him. "Come on, Britches," she said as she ran by him. "Let's see where the path leads."

They were about to come to a place that would change their lives in a way they could never have imagined, a place that Arielle would call "the hollow".