

Barbara Rose: Vol. 1, Whisperworld – Departure for the Land of the Animal Whisperers
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Bd. 1: Whisperworld - Aufbruch ins Land der Tierflüsterer

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ENGLISH SAMPLE TRANSLATION

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Prologue

Roaaaaaar!

The lion's roar boomed through the wilderness. It echoed from the green hill on which he stood, down to the river, resounding across the mist-covered tops of oaks, beeches and crooked tamarind trees with their numerous lianas.

Startled, a few parrots fluttered out of the damp haze and circled for a while high above the leaf crowns, which shone in all shades of green in the light of the just-risen sun.

The egrets in the marshes and the sloths and monkeys in the trees froze, the hummingbirds paused for a moment in flight.

The lion was lying in wait, his soft pads pressed against the grass, his claws not yet fully extended. He stood with his head held high, his mouth wide open, his fangs flashing in the sunlight. Wind ruffled the golden-brown mane. The lion had his eyes slightly closed, his ears turned to the side so that not the slightest noise could escape him.

He did not move, only the tail with the black tassel moved back and forth like a wriggling royal python.

The lion was waiting.

Then a woman climbed the hill and ran towards the predator with energetic steps. A few curls had come loose from her pith helmet and were curling around her face. Over her right shoulder she carried a rifle, which she held casually with her hand, the barrel to the rear, her finger on the trigger.

The lion did not move. His body was tense and vibrated slightly, as if he wanted to leap off at any moment, to sink his huge claws into the woman's body.

But the woman paid no attention. Unmoved, she approached the predator and stopped in front of it.

For a moment it was silent. Completely silent, except for the sound of the lion's tail twitching. Then the woman reached out a hand, placed it gently on the lion's back and smiled. "You're right, Carlos! Silvester is late. But that can happen with such a long distance. Don't worry about it."

The lion shook its mane, roared once more and then growled hoarsely.

"Nothing bad will have happened," the woman said. "The sun has just risen, there is still enough light for a few hours for a safe landing."

With one hand she lifted the pith helmet, with the other she wiped her sweaty forehead. As she did so, it began to rumble strangely in the canvas bag she wore around her shoulder. A scaly head with large folds of skin at the throat appeared, then a shimmering blue torso with a dorsal crest that reached to the tail.

"Well, go on, Iggy." To have a secure footing, the woman put her legs slightly apart and waited until the Blue Iguana had peeled out of the bag. "You'll get the best view in your favourite position."

Nimble, the reptile climbed up the woman's jacket like a trained mountaineer. It settled on her shoulder and wiggled its head.

"Look how the moonlight mountains glisten in the sunlight." The woman turned in the opposite direction and pointed into the distance. "Even the Crocodile River looks like liquid silver today. From up here, everything looks wonderfully calm." Again the dark roar of the lion resounded.

Roaaaaar!

The woman didn't make a face, but calmly shadowed her face and looked up at the sky. "Your eyes really don't miss anything, Carlos. I would never have recognised that tiny dot as a plane! Here they are at last ... our new animal whisperers!"

For a brief moment she squinted her eyes and took a deep breath. "I hope they pass the exams, I'd hate to send one or more of them straight back home ..."

The Vocation

"Meggy, pass the butter already!"

"Man, yo! Don't stress me!"

Coco pressed her hands over her ears. Why did it always have to be so chaotic here? Couldn't her siblings even have breakfast like normal people? Calmly and without arguments?

Coco's old cat Muffin cleaned his front paw with relish and curled up in her lap again. His retreat. The youngest of the Walter-children was the only one the tomcat was comfortable with. Coco regularly protected Muffin from the rudeness of her sisters or the loud music with which her brother Ben often annoyed the cat.

When peace had returned around them,

Coco leafed through some papers lying on the breakfast table in front of her. Lost in thought, she twirled a strand of her dark hair around her finger. She often did this when she was tense.

"Coco, put your school things away, we're having breakfast here!" growled Ben.

"I'm not hungry," Coco replied apologetically, but gathered up her sheets anyway. "I really need to look at my paper in PE again." Her sister Meggy rolled her eyes. "You're always so ... ambitious. You're such a nerd."

"Coco is just conscientious," her father noted.

"And mostly as mute as a fish!" her brother Ben muttered.

I never get a word in edgewise anyway, Coco thought.

Then Muffin suddenly climbed onto the window sill. Coco's gaze followed him.

"Muffin?"

"Let me see." Ben snatched the documents out of Coco's hand without being asked and skimmed them. "This is a disaster. Sport is obviously not your subject ..."

Coco was about to retort, annoyed, when she heard a short whistle and then

Coco?

What had that sound been? Had someone whispered her name? No one from her family in any case, they were all busy with themselves. Coco turned her head towards the tilted kitchen window and watched in fascination as a colourful bird fluttered past it. Coco could have sworn that he paused for a moment in flight and looked at her. But ... that was complete nonsense, of course.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Ben, confused. "Did you see a UFO out there?" He laughed at his own joke. "Hello? Earth to Coco!"

But since his sister did not respond to the joke, he quickly lost interest.

Coco!?

There! That whisper again. But this time with more emphasis and louder than the first time.

Coco turned searchingly to her parents and siblings. "Do you hear that too?" asked Coco. But no one paid any attention to her. She had probably spoken too quietly again.

Coco! Coooooooo!

Again! A short, melodic whistle. Coco clearly heard the call, which was obviously inaudible to everyone else.

She straightened up in her chair and peered into the garden. There was a flash of something colourful in the chestnut tree. A parrot with a yellow-red head and a yellow-green shining back. Had it ... called her?

Parrots could talk, Coco knew that. Or at least some species could repeat what someone had taught them. But ... their name? Besides, Coco had never seen such a parrot, and she had written down the characteristics of several species in her notebooks.

"I, uh, have to pack something in my room for school. I'll just take a banana for breakfast!" Coco hurriedly got up from the table and scurried into her room.

She pulled a large animal encyclopaedia from the shelf and lay down on the bed with it. Hectically she turned the pages. It couldn't be true ... The bird in the garden was a Carolina parakeet. One hundred percent. But this species had actually died out over 100 years ago ... Absentmindedly, Coco stroked Muffin the cat, who had followed her leisurely as usual.

"Can you believe that, muffin? A bird that's extinct. And calling my name?"

The cat looked up, tilted his head and suddenly jumped onto the floor. Coco could not believe her eyes. Normally Muffin only moved very slowly, like a cat grandpa.

"What's wrong?" asked Coco in a soft voice. Muffin paid no attention to her. He hurried out of the room in a flash and Coco heard the cat flap in the front door. What did that mean? She ran to the window and flattened her nose. But she couldn't see Muffin anywhere. The Carolina parakeet was gone too. Had she imagined the whole thing?

Coco had just sunk back onto her bed and made herself comfortable with the encyclopaedia, when she heard the clatter of the cat flap again. That had to be Muffin. But why was he back again? Coco noticed how her heart beat faster. She lifted her head in anticipation. Sure enough! The cat ran into the Room, meowing. A paper roll dangled from his collar. Coco swallowed. "What's that?" She bent down.

By now her heart was beating up to her throat. Carefully she loosened the roll and unfolded it:

Whisperworld is calling you!

Coco Walter,

*you have been chosen to be **the animal whisperer.***

ENDANGERED SPECIES NEED YOUR HELP!

We will meet at Beagle Cove Airport on 15th September at 6 o'clock. Prepare for a long flight followed by a walk.

**VOL. 1, WHISPERWORLD - DEPARTURE
FOR THE LAND OF THE ANIMAL
WHISPERERS**

**Bd. 1: Whisperworld - Aufbruch ins Land der
Tierflüsterer**

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You will receive equipment from us.

No mobile phone, no PC, no technology of any kind.

The adventure begins, be ready!

Coco read the invitation in bewilderment for the second, then the third and fourth time. Unbelievable. Whisperworld! The land of the animal whisperers! She had dreamed of it for years, but had never told anyone about her greatest wish.

And now it was coming true.

Finally!

Chapter 1 - A rickety plane

Coco pressed her nose against the window. So hard that it almost hurt. But she didn't really notice the pain, she was completely fascinated by the view. Simply gigantic!

The propeller plane flew low so that Coco, from her seat in the front of the plane, could clearly see everything that stretched out below her through the cockpit window.

It was still early in the morning. The sun was just rising like an orange ball on the horizon, bathing the surroundings in golden light.

Coco blinked. She must have slept for several hours, because they had taken off from Beagle Cove towards evening. Coco still remembered that they had flown for a long time over flat land, over numerous rivers and at some point over a huge mountain range. To the right and left, the mountain peaks had pressed so close to the plane, that Coco had thought she could touch her. She had closed her eyes in fear ... and must have dozed off.

They were still flying over heavily rugged and densely forested mountainous terrain. But the mountains were no longer as high, the landscape had changed completely. A green sea of plants now lay beneath the aircraft. Vigorous haze rose from the tall trees. Coco almost felt as if she could smell the damp earth and the plant life. She quickly opened a page in her notebook and scribbled something down. Since she had climbed into the six-seater plane, she had been taking notes. She had a book on rare plants, as well as closely written notebooks on countries, weather phenomena and landscape forms. Also numerous notebooks on endangered species.

Right now she was leafing through one of them. But soon she had to look out of the window again. The view was simply too beautiful. The trees shone in the most varied shades of green, interspersed with a silvery, meandering ribbon.

"That's the Crocodile River," Silvester, the pilot, called to the rear without taking his eyes off the helm. "It runs through the whole area, but is only a small part of Whisperworld. The river is not without its dangers. There are lots of crocodiles in it and other critters ..." But if he had expected Coco or the four other boys and girls on the plane to be impressed, he was wrong.

"Don't worry, I know how dangerous crocodiles can be," one of the boys replied dryly.

Coco turned to him. His name was Chuck, he was sitting right behind her and he had already caught Coco's eye when they first met at the small Beagle Cove airport. Chuck was the coolest boy she had ever seen. He wore his snapback cap casually back over his short brown hair, with sweatpants and sneakers.

Chuck yawned and stretched. "There should be plenty of predators, dangerous snakes and poisonous spiders in this area. I think they're worse than crocodiles." As he talked, Coco noticed his legs fidgeting and his eyes darting around. He also took off his cap again and again, stroked his head absentmindedly and then put the snapback back on. Maybe Chuck wasn't as relaxed and laid-back as he pretended to be.

"You know about animals, don't you? When did you get your invitation to Whisperworld?" a boy wanted to know in a low voice. He wore a knitted cap over his blond hair and an enormously thick watch on his wrist that looked quite expensive. Coco wondered about this, because technology, as the invitation had said, was not allowed in Whisperworld.

He sat diagonally behind Chuck, and now Coco also remembered that his name was Paul. That was how he had introduced himself to the pilot at the airport. And then he had yapped about how super he had prepared himself for the adventure.

"When did I get my invitation? Four weeks ago ... roughly," Chuck answered and looked out the window. The plane suddenly jolted briefly and then sank noticeably - Coco's stomach and surely those of the other passengers as well.

"Don't panic!" shouted Silvester. "It's just some air turbulence. Damn wind shear, it's on that last mountain ahead. It'll pass in a minute."

"Mr Silvester, may I ask a question? Will it take much longer?", Coco heard a pressed voice.

As she looked around, the boy with the Indian name nodded briefly at her. He was sitting in the row next to Chuck. What was his name again? Coco thought about it. Oh yes, Mohit. A nice guy, definitely incredibly polite. She had talked to him briefly at the airport where the new students had met, but she had noticed that immediately.

Mohit was not particularly tall, had dark eyes and black hair. He was rather huddled in his seat and gave a suppressed groan. Coco frowned. Something was wrong with him. Should she help him? After all, she had taken an extra first aid course for Whisperworld. Coco looked around the plane. The other children didn't seem particularly interested in how Mohit was feeling. Maybe she should just leave him alone and ... Coco bit her lower lip ...

No! She wanted to finally stop being so shy. So let's go!

She bent backwards. "Say ... uh ... Mohit ... can I help you with something?" she whispered.

"He's sick," Chuck replied in his place, looking at Mohit and grinning wryly. "Too bad, buddy.

Next time you might want to think twice about getting on a plane like that."

Coco would have liked to say something back, but she wasn't very quick-witted. Unfortunately.

Mohit was pale, his hair stuck to his head, his dark eyes half-closed. Mohit's one hand clutched a vomit bag he had fished out of the compartment in the seat in front of him. He made a strange noise and pressed his other hand to his stomach.

"Do you need help?" asked Coco again. "So if you feel sick, then ..."

"Please don't throw up on my sneakers," Chuck interrupted. "They're new."

Coco rolled her eyes.

Mohit shook his head. Like a single billowing mass, he hung in the seat. Coco saw him tugging at his collar and trying to fix a point in front of him with a blurry gaze. Good plan. That's exactly what Coco would have advised him to do against the nausea.

It was oppressively hot on the plane, yet Mohit had buttoned his jacket up to his neck. He shook himself.

"Put your head against the glass," Coco said. "That helps."

"Thank you, thank you very much," Mohit pressed out.

Coco watched his face relax a little at the cool window.

In as firm a voice as possible, he asked, "Uh ... may I interrupt again? Are we there soon, Mr Silvester?"

"Fifteen minutes maybe, twenty minutes at the most," Silvester returned. "You can just call me Silvester. In Whisperworld we are one big family."

Another moan from Mohit, then silence.

Coco sighed softly. She felt so sorry for the boy! Travel sickness was really the last thing!

At that moment, she noticed Silvester slowly pulling the wheel down. Had they arrived yet?

"There's a place to land there too, I hope? It all looks pretty overgrown. I don't feel like banging into trees."

What was this guy so negative about? Paul reminded Coco of her annoying brother Ben. He was always nagging too.

She turned back again and watched for a while as Paul looked sceptically over the jungle landscape. At the airport, he had told Silvester that he had been preparing for the trip to Whisperworld for a long time. In the days leading up to the departure, Paul had probably devoured several thick guidebooks on survival in the wilderness.

Paul didn't exactly seem like a book rat to Coco. More like a rather spoilt child.

This was also indicated by his clothes and expensive watch.

"Relax, buddy," Chuck now interjected and yawned. He fumbled a packet of chewing gum out of his pocket and popped one into his mouth.

"New Year's Eve doesn't fly around here for the first time, I guess. I'm sure we'll see the airport soon."

Coco heard a suppressed laugh from the pilot.

"Relaxed?" grumbled Paul in Chuck's direction. "I'm relaxed. You can't get more relaxed than that."

"Could I have some gum too, please?" whispered Mohit. "It might help settle my stomach."

"Logical." Chuck rummaged in his pocket again and fished out the gum. "Take what you need.

And give the others one too," he added generously.

"Can you pass the parcel to me in the front, too?" said Coco quietly. And when she realised that no one was paying attention to her, she repeated loudly: "I want one too!"

"Oops, you don't have to yell in my ear like that," Silvester growled, turning to her briefly.

Coco blushed and took the gum Chuck handed her in the front.

"How big is the airport we're landing at?" asked Amy. She was sitting at the back of the plane and had been asleep until now.

For a moment Coco watched the girl with the hazel eyes. Amy looked somehow ... nice. And when she wasn't sleeping, she babbled like a waterfall.

"Do you fly often?" asked Coco quietly.

"My father is a pilot, my mother a flight attendant," Amy gushed. "So I feel like I've travelled all over the world. Almost always by plane, of course. When you travel so much, you learn to be everywhere.

sleep." She lifted her pillow, thumped it once with her fist and laughed. "And nothing is better for that than your own pillow."

Coco registered how her gaze suddenly darkened.

"Actually, our family isn't really at home anywhere, they're always on the road."

Amy groaned. "And the older I get, the more it gets on my nerves. Oh my God, how are you supposed to make friends this way, finally get somewhere?"

Amy dropped her head back onto her pillow with the numerous braids braided tightly at the hairline and decorated with pearls. "So what was that about the airport now, New Year's Eve?" she called out in a loud, clear voice.

A voice that Coco envied. It was a sure way of not being overheard by anyone!

"The airport is ... well ... special," answered the Pilot Amy's question. "Let yourselves be surprised. And get ready to land." He abruptly jerked the wheel down.

"But ... but there's no runway anywhere!" exclaimed Amy. She squinted her eyes and peered out of the small side window.

Silvester laughed booming. "Well, if by that you mean some airport thing, made of concrete and with pretty lamps ... nope, there's no such thing. We are in Whisperworld, not in a concrete city. Everything here is nature, even the slope. A bit uneven and ..." he paused, "not entirely without danger. Now hold on tight. We're landing!"

Suddenly there was silence in the aircraft, only the hum of the propeller could be heard.

In her stomach and ears, Coco felt the increasing vibration and the descent of the propeller plane. Curious, she looked out the window to see the runway. But there wasn't one. Nowhere! Only tall trees and dense foliage. Nevertheless, Silvester let the machine sink further and further.

Coco nibbled her fingernails in excitement. A glance at the other passengers told her that some were not feeling any better: Mohit held his head over his bag and

closed his eyes. Chuck was breathing fast and shallow, only Amy and Paul seemed completely fearless.

There at last! Coco took a deep breath. A narrow, bright strip appeared between the trees. Hardly recognisable as a runway, but Silvester steered calmly towards it.

Lower and lower the plane sank and at the same time Coco's stomach seemed to slide towards the back of her knees until ...

"Djamila and her darn gang." With a jerk, Silvester pulled the wheel up and immediately the machine climbed again.

"Damn!"

A dull thud made Coco cringe, with great force she was pushed into her seat, but Coco's stomach shot up, at the same time she tried to peer out the window to see the reason for Silvester's manoeuvre.

A horde of reddish-brown orangutans, large and small, raged just a few metres below them across the short runway where Silvester had wanted to land.

"Go on, my dear, higher," Silvester urged.

"Come on, do it now!"

"Oh no! We're flying straight for the trees!" Coco stared ahead in horror and gestured with her hand to the cockpit window.

Within sight, a dense wall of tall, extremely wide trunks, branches and leaves towered. Chuck, Amy, Paul and even Mohit had followed Coco's gaze and stretched their necks to see better.

Coco swallowed. Her heart froze into ice. The plane was heading straight for the group of trees! In a moment they would crash into it, sure as death!

"Do it!" Silvester held his hands around the wheel like vices and pulled it back with all his might, but the propeller machine was still far too low, only slowly gaining altitude. Much too slowly!

Coco held her breath. And then ... finally ... seconds before the collision, the propeller plane flew high enough to hover a few centimetres above the overhanging treetops.

Hordes of iridescent macaws burst out of the dense leaves, a firework of colours, as if the birds wanted to celebrate the successful manoeuvre.

"Yes! Done!" Satisfied, Silvester tapped the metal beside him. Coco could almost giggle again. It looked like he was praising a dog.

The pilot turned around for a moment. "Well then, here's to a new one."

Five minutes later, the plane rumbled on the ground over the uneven grass strip that cut through the middle of the jungle. After a few hundred metres, the plane came to a stop.

Silvester turned again to Coco and the other passengers. "Welcome to Whisperworld!"

Still slightly dazed, Coco watched as he scrambled nimbly to the back, opened the door from the inside and jumped out of the small machine, which was not so easy because Silvester was huge.

"He looks like *The Rock*, the actor, you know," Coco heard Paul whisper.

"You mean the former wrestler," Chuck returned quietly. "But really! Silvester is ruggedly toned. I want to look like that someday."

"Hurry up!" shouted Silvester from outside. "They're probably expecting us already."

With trembling legs, Coco, Chuck, Paul and Amy pushed their way out of the machine one after the other. Coco noticed that Mohit was slow to follow.

In the almost cool shadow of the plane's fuselage, Coco and the others stopped.

Shortly afterwards, something stirred between two trees in the nearby jungle and from the dense greenery came with springy movements, a mighty lion approached the group, followed by a woman carrying a huge iguana on one shoulder, a rifle on the other.

"If I told this at home," Coco whispered, "no one would believe me!"

"Here come Doctor Noa, Carlos and Iggy, a very rare blue iguana," said Silvester.

There was pride and respect in his voice. "Doctor Noa is the great-granddaughter of the founder of Whisperworld."