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Little Girl Survives 11 Days in Forest Thanks to Family Dog

By Jennifer Monaghan

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Karina Chikitova managed to survive alone in the Russian wilderness for 11 days.

A 3-year-old girl managed to survive alone in the Russian wilderness for 11 days by picking berries and drinking river water, thanks to a series of heroic endeavors by the family dog.

Little Karina Chikitova disappeared on July 29 from her home in the village of Olom in the Sakha republic. She was believed to have wandered into the forest in pursuit of her father, who was unaware his daughter was following him, The Siberian Times reported.

Four days passed before the girl's mother was able to contact her husband, at which point she discovered to her despair that their daughter was not in his care.

Fortunately, Karina's loyal puppy had traipsed into the forest alongside her, and would soon save the day.

The toddler slept among the tall grasses of the taiga each night, making it especially difficult

for search helicopters to locate her. Although temperatures in the area sunk to an average of 6 degrees Celsius each night, rescuers believe that Karina was able to keep warm at night by curling up with the dog.

She sustained herself during the day by eating berries and drinking river water, The Siberian Times reported.

About 100 people were involved in search efforts for Karina, though hope was nearly lost when her puppy emerged alone from the forest ten days later.

"That was the moment when our hearts sank, because we thought at least with her dog Karina had chances to survive," Afanasy Nikolayev, a spokesman for the Sakha republic rescue service, said in comments carried by The Siberian Times.

However, with the puppy's help, rescuers managed to retrace the dog's steps, leading them back to Chikitova.

Chikitova was discovered without any shoes, miraculously having suffered only mosquito bites and minor scratches during the fretful ordeal.

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