

Ririro

# The Squirrel Family



In a big, hollow tree in the forest, lived the Squirrel family: daddy Squirrel, mommy Squirrel, daughter Betty and son Budge. They lived in the most beautiful tree in the forest and were very happy together. Betty and Budge chased each other through the branches and played hide and seek in the leaves. They lived joyfully and carelessly. But Betty and Budge liked playing with their cousins above all.

The entire summer they chased each other and played together. When it started to get colder they were surprised that the gorgeous green leaves started changing colours; to red, yellow, brown and gold. 'What is going on?' Budge thought to himself and checked if Betty's tale hadn't suddenly changed colour. It seemed as if the whole world had changed.

All the nuts started to fall from the trees and daddy Squirrel and mommy Squirrel were busy all day collecting them for winter. They knew that it would get very cold very soon, with big heaps of snow and that there would be nothing to eat, except what they had collected in their drey. And feeding four hungry mouths was no easy task. So they worked very hard, but the cold weather came sooner than expected and daddy Squirrel started to worry if they would be able to collect enough food before the snow started to fall.

So he called Budge and Betty to him and asked if they could help him collect nuts. Budge found it hard, because he was never thought to work. His sister Betty was a hard worker and worked all day, but Budge got very tired after collecting a couple of nuts and fell asleep.



The next day it was cloudy and cold and the squirrels agreed that it would snow that night, so they quickly went to work. Daddy and mommy Squirrel said: 'If we all work hard today, we will have enough nuts by the evening to last us the entire winter.'

They frantically started collecting the nuts and didn't even bother talking to each other. That's why it took some time to realize that Budge had disappeared and was nowhere to be seen. The rest of the family started working even harder, because even though only three squirrels were collecting, in the end four had to eat.

Budge, who got distracted by a couple of squirrels that were playing games in the neighbourhood, ran away to play along. And after a game of playing tag between the leaves, on his way home, he got stuck in a trap! Two boys had set the trap and wanted to take Budge home as a pet. Poor Budge! He was terrified. 'If only I had stayed with my family to help them collect nuts', he thought to himself.

The boys walked to a small house, with no trees in sight. Budge thought he would die living there. It looked so unwelcoming. It was getting dark and because the boys didn't have a cage they put Budge in a cardboard box. Budge lied down and pretended to be asleep, but the only thing he could think about was his warm little house and his parents. In the meantime his father, mother and sister were wondering where he was and hoped he was alright.



At first, Budge was too scared to move, but slowly he got a bit braver and decided to escape. He gnawed a little hole in the box and after a few hours it was big enough for him to escape. He ran through the cold, the dark and the snow to his warm family home. On his way he thought about the nuts he didn't collect and imagined he would be hungry all winter.

'Maybe it's even better to just stay away', he thought. He thought his sister would be ashamed of him and that she would never want to see him again. Once

or twice he turned around, but he decided to be brave and return home. Once he arrived at the tree, his father, mother and sister were having breakfast. They were happy to see him and wanted to hear the whole story. Everybody was happy to have him back. So happy even, that they made a feast in honour of his return and invited the neighbours.

Nowadays Budge is very happy and not at all lazy anymore! He thinks it's better to spend some time working hard. That's why, if you see a squirrel working very hard in fall to collect nuts, it's probably Budge. Because Budge works the hardest of them all!