



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Mr. Fox's House Party

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Mr. Fox was often disturbed by Mr. Dog and his owner, so he decided to move to the first floor of the forest instead of living on the ground floor. One night, he looked around in the moonlight and to his delight, he discovered the place he wanted to live.

It was a house built in the branches of a large tree. Some boys had probably made it the year before. "With a little repair here and there, this will now be the most beautiful house in the forest," Mr. Fox said contentedly.

So he went looking for everything he needed to make his house comfortable from Mr. Man. He even found an old stovepipe to keep his stove burning well. And within a few days, Mr. Fox told all his friends about his new house and invited them to a house party.

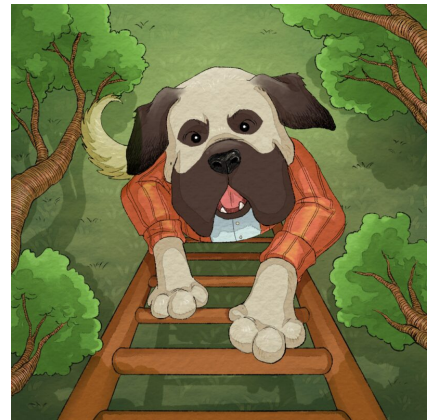


Mr. Snake, Mr. Pouch Rat, and Mr. Squirrel were not bothered when they found out that Mr. Fox's new house was in the big tree. But Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Badger looked very sad and said they would not accept Mr. Fox's friendly invitation, as much as they wanted to. They could not climb the tree.

Mr. Fox borrowed a ladder from Mr. Man, and when Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Badger said they couldn't come, Mr. Fox remembered that he was not such a good climber himself, and that if he didn't have the ladder, he would have trouble getting into his house, especially if he was in a hurry. So he decided that Mr. Man probably didn't need the ladder as much as he did and that the ladder would be a nice addition to his house.

When he told Mr. Badger and Mr. Rabbit about the ladder, they decided to come after all, and one evening, when the moon was shining, the animals would all come to Mr. Fox's house to eat. Mr. Fox thought he would spend the least money if he gave his guests soup, so he took all the bones he had collected and put them in a pot on the stove to cook.

The smoke rose from his chimney and spread the delicious scent of soup. Mr. Dog, who happened to be running through the forest, saw the smoke and sniffed the delicious scent. He wagged his tail and looked up at the house in the tree. Then he howled and scratched at the tree, and as he walked around it, with his eyes fixed on the house the whole time, he bumped into the ladder.



"Oh, what luck!" he said, and he climbed up and went into Mr. Fox's house, where he took the lid off the pot.

It took him less than a second to take the pot off the stove, pour the soup into the sink, and let the bones cool. So he had a delicious feast. He ate until he became drowsy, then he lay down on the floor and fell asleep. Mr. Dog didn't know that Mr. Fox lived in that house. Not that he was afraid of him, but he would have slept with one eye open so he could grab him.

Mr. Fox roamed the hills, looking for a stray turkey or chicken, and he didn't come home until almost dark. He ran up the ladder without turning on the light and went straight to the stove to see how his soup was doing. Then he stumbled over Mr. Dog. Mr. Dog jumped up with a gruff bark. Mr. Fox ran away as fast as he could, but he didn't use the ladder, he jumped out the window and almost broke his neck. Mr. Dog barked fiercely at him.

Mr. Fox didn't stop running, and Mr. Dog, thinking about the bones he hadn't eaten yet, turned away from the window and threw himself onto the bones. While he was still eating, the first guests for the house party arrived. Mr. Snake didn't need the ladder to come in, and neither did Mr. Pouch Rat. Mr. Squirrel had no trouble climbing at all. But they thought it would be impolite to go in any other way.

Mr. Pouch Rat went up the ladder first, followed by Mr. Snake. Then Mr. Badger and Mr. Rabbit came up, while Mr. Squirrel ran up the ladder. When they were about halfway up, Mr. Dog, who heard noise outside, went to the door. He gave them the surprise of their lives, but he himself was so surprised that he didn't even bark at first.

After he recovered from his shock, he went out the door barking. But Mr. Dog wasn't used to descending a ladder, and on the first step, he slipped and slid down. The guests had jumped down right away when Mr. Dog barked, but they weren't out of the way yet when Mr. Dog fell on top of them. Along with Mr. Dog, Mr. Pouch Rat, Mr. Snake, and Mr. Badger all tumbled down.



Mr. Squirrel had jumped onto a branch of the tree and wasn't fazed by the ordeal. He said it was the funniest sight he had ever seen, and he had a nice view from where he was sitting. But Mr. Rabbit said he was sure his perspective was the best because he was closest to the bottom of the ladder when the fall began. He had just gotten out of the way in time when they all fell to the ground.

"You couldn't even see who was who, it was such chaos," said Mr. Rabbit, who later talked about it with Mr. Squirrel.

It took a long time for Mr. Fox to convince the guests that he hadn't intended to have Mr. Dog at his house party. But when Mr. Squirrel told them that it really was Mr. Dog who had eaten the bones off the floor and cleaned the pot without Mr. Fox knowing, they finally forgave Mr. Fox. Mr. Fox decided that the ground floor was safest for him after all. When he was settled again, he gave a new house party, but this time, Mr. Dog wasn't there, fortunately.



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