



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Bushy's Bravery

Unknown writer

Early one morning, Mr. Squirrel poked his head out of his hollow tree and frowned. Not one nut was to be seen on the ground.

"Jack Frost didn't come last night," he told Mrs. Squirrel, who was standing close beside him. "There isn't a nut anywhere. I'm afraid it's going to take us a long time to gather all we need."

"But Jack Frost will come to our tree," she said. "He never fails. Look, there's Mrs. Bushytail out early, too, searching the ground. Perhaps he's shaken some down for her. Let's run over and see."

Away frisked Mr. and Mrs. Squirrel as fast as their legs would carry them. But no, Jack Frost hadn't visited Mrs. Bushytail's tree either. She had looked all over the ground and couldn't find a single nut, and she couldn't explain it.

"Let's wait until tomorrow," said Mrs. Squirrel. "He'll surely come tonight. Then what fun Bushy and Frisky will have gathering them! They'll have to work hard to fill our winter store. And boys love nuts, too," she added with a sigh. "But we'll wait."

Morning came, and Jack Frost had been there in earnest. The nuts lay scattered all over the ground.

"Now to work," said Mr. Squirrel. "Come, Bushy and Frisky."

It was a busy day for the squirrel family. They knew how many, many nuts a winter needs, and Mr. Squirrel kept reminding the little ones that they would have to work hard, perhaps until the sun went down.

But alas! "Boys love nuts, too," Mrs. Squirrel had said, and now a rustle sounded in the bushes, and boys' voices came loud and clear. The little workers dropped everything, raced to the hollow tree, and whisked up inside. There they huddled, trembling.

After a few minutes, Bushy, who was a little braver than the rest, crept up to a small hole and peeked out. Frisky stood just behind him.

"Boys," whispered Bushy. "Three of them. And they all have bags!"

Poor Bushy and Frisky! If there was one thing these little squirrels loved more

than anything, it was gathering nuts, and now their chance was spoiled. The boys would surely take every nut they could find.

"They're working hard," said Bushy.

"Will they leave any for us?" asked Frisky, who didn't dare peek out at all.

"Sh! Listen, Frisky. I heard one of the boys say there are nuts under the other tree. That's Mrs. Bushytail's tree. Two of them are going over there now. And look, they've left two of the bags!"

"Where, Bushy?"

"One boy is sitting on a bag right there. I think he's cracking nuts."

"And the other bag?"

"The other one is close by our tree."

Before anyone could say a word, Bushy was out of the hole, down the trunk, and beside the big bag. Mrs. Squirrel called him back, but it was no use. Up and down the bag he ran, first to the top, then around the sides. He couldn't find a way in, because the bag was tied tight. But Bushy's teeth were sharp.

"Dear, dear," cried his mother. "Here come the boys back, and they'll surely see him. Oh, dear, dear!"



Bushy caught sight of the boys heading toward the tree for their bags. With a whisk and a scamper, he was up the trunk and back in his hole in no time.

"Dear, dear Bushy," said his mother. "What a fright you gave us! There's no telling what would have happened if they'd seen you."

The squirrel family watched the boys pick up their bags, swing them over their shoulders, and go.

"Why, Tom, look at your bag," said one of the boys. "It has a hole in it. You must have dropped ever so many nuts along the way."

"A hole?" Tom said in surprise, lifting the bag from his shoulder. "So it does. And a pretty big one, too. How did that get there? It wasn't there when I started."

When the boys were gone, Mr. Squirrel's family crept out once more.

"It's no use, I'm afraid," began Mrs. Squirrel. "Those boys were good workers, and... dear me, there are nuts sprinkled all along the path! What does it mean?"

"It's strange," said Mr. Squirrel. "I really thought those boys had found them all. Perhaps boys' eyes aren't as sharp as we think."

Bushy kept right on gathering nuts, smiling to himself. How sly he was! Not one of the family seemed to guess the truth. It was only that night, when he and Frisky were going to bed, that Frisky dared to whisper:

"Bushy, did you put that hole in that bag?"

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