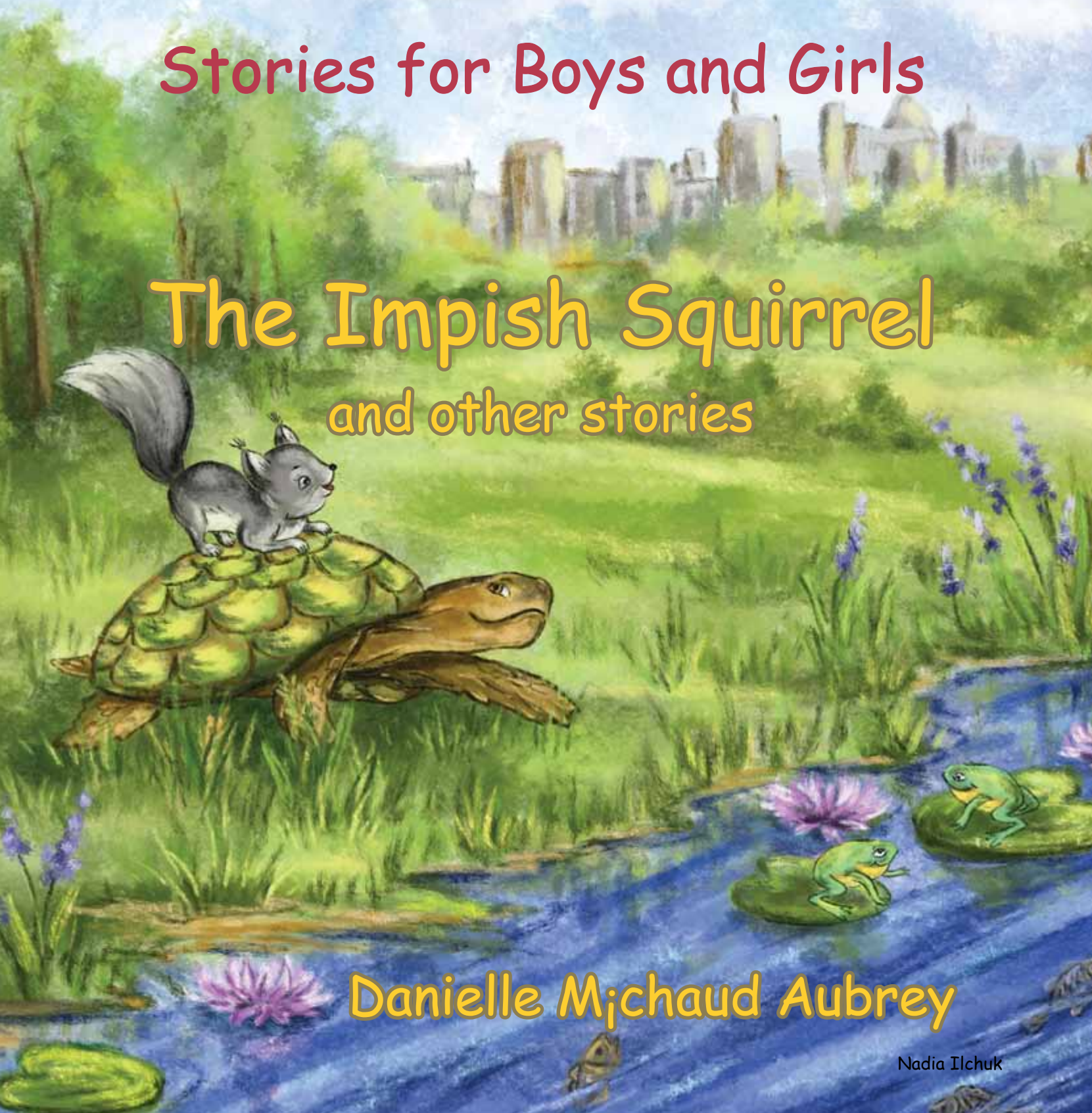
Stories for Boys and Girls

# The Impish Squirrel

## and other stories



Danielle Michaud Aubrey

Nadia Ilchuk

# 10 stories from *A Walk in the Wind*

by Danielle Michaud Aubrey

**The Impish Squirrel and other stories**

**BOOK ONE**

Children's imagination will flourish as they learn about

*community
*compassion
*collaboration

© Danielle Michaud Aubrey
BA Sociology
BA Psychology, Women's Studies
MA Conflict Studies

Cover art: Nadia Ilchuk

Petra Books
petrabooks.ca

ISBN 978-1-989048-24-5

Stories for Boys and Girls

# The Impish Squirrel

## and other stories

BOOK ONE

Danielle Michaud Aubrey

The Impish Squirrel and other stories
Stories for Boys and Girls
BOOK ONE
Danielle Michaud Aubrey

Selections from *A Walk in the WInd*
by Danielle Michaud Aubrey

Available in French with Translation by Sébastien Bonastre.
<< L'écureuil feignant et autres histoires
Histoires pour garçons et filles >>
Livre un

Illustrations by:
Nadia Ilchuk (cover, 2, 22, 40, 52, 64, 76, 94)
K.K.P. Dananjali (32, 86)
Vladimir Cebu (12)

Traditional Rhyme:
"Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear" (page 16)

Poem:
"Kindness" by Stephen Grellet 1773-1855 (page 90)

110 pages
approx. 17,000 words
Comic Sans 32, 14/20

© Danielle Michaud Aubrey 2019
BA Sociology
BA Psychology, Women's Studies
MA Conflict Studies

Editing and design
Petra Books
petrabooks.ca

Dedicated to

Emma, Léo, Sacha, Victor

This book belongs to

_____

# Table of Contents

Henrietta the Gossiping Hen ..... 3

Alphabet Dreams ..... 13

The Mouse in the House ..... 23

The Girl in the Mirror ..... 33

I Can Do This ! ..... 41

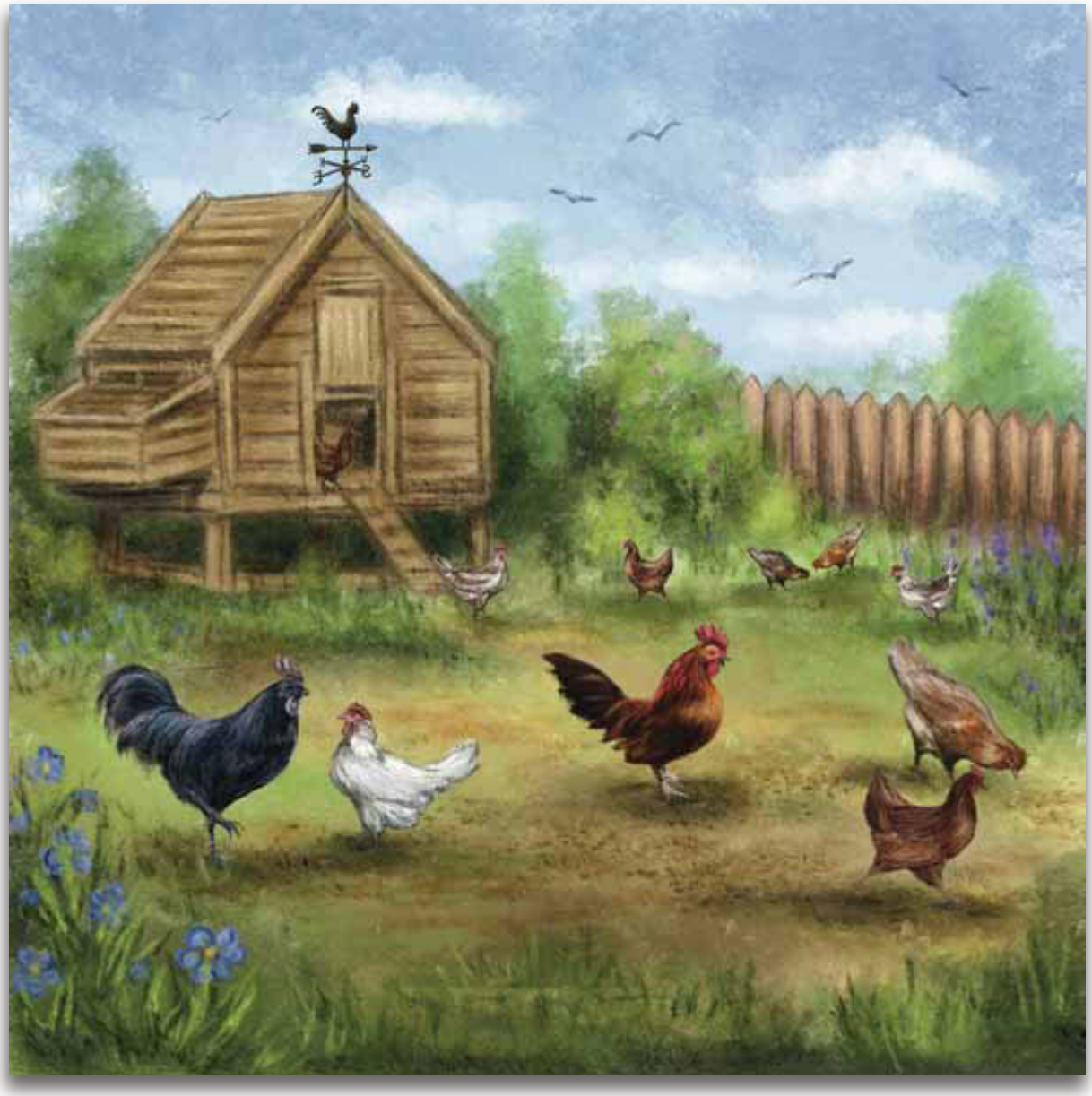
The Impish Squirrel ..... 53

The Smallest Paddle ..... 65

A Walk in the Wind ..... 77

Grandma's Alphabet Soup ..... 87

Blue Feather and the 'Sabe' ..... 95



# Henrietta the Gossiping Hen

Farmer Fred was moving back and forth in his rocking chair while sipping his afternoon tea. "Lilly, can you come out here for a minute?" he asked his wife who was cooking in the kitchen. "Take a look at the hens," he pointed to the hens that were pecking around the yard. "Look at the little brown one with the long red feathers on her back. Every time she goes near the others, they turn away from her and peck in another direction."

Lilly certainly thought this was strange. The hens usually paid little attention to each other as they pecked at the corn meal. "Do you think that the new hens are disturbing the group?" she asked.

"I don't know, but I will watch them over the next few days," Farmer Fred replied. What Farmer Fred did not know was that the little brown hen with the long red feathers, which he called Henrietta, was a gossip! Henrietta loved to prattle on about the other hens. And often the other hens would remind her to not

speak badly of them. They asked her to not spread rumors about them.

That morning when Henrietta came down the ramp to the garden she "tut-tutted — the grass is wet, my toes are wet!" She joined the other hens that were pecking at the corn meal. "Puk-puk, puk-puk," she said noticing that Fredericka, the tubby round white hen, was pecking quite fast. Then Henrietta commented to the hen pecking next to her: "Pawk-pawk, pawk-pawk — just look at that Fredericka, she's eating all the meal!"

Raveena, the tall grand black hen, looked down her beak at Henrietta and responded quietly "myuh-myuh, prrk-prrk — Fredericka laid quite an egg last night, she's just hungry!"

"Puk-puk, puk-puk," Henrietta pecked some more as she walked further into the yard. "Pawk-pawk, pawk-pawk — Raveena is certainly snappy this fine morning," she said to no one in particular. "Pawk-pawk, pawk-pawk — it must be very difficult to bend from so high up, how unlucky she is to be so tall!"

The little brown hens, Rosetta and Brunettia, who were always so happy to just peck and peck and peck at the corn meal, hushed

Henrietta with a chorus of "Puk-puk, puk-puk — if you have nothing nice to say, then don't say it!" And they turned their backs to Henrietta!

Henrietta strutted to the new hens and told them "Pawk-pawk, pawk-pawk — the little brown hens have such dull feathers, not nearly as nice as your own." The new hens, who had heard Henrietta gossiping earlier, did not trust Henrietta's words. The new hens did not think that Henrietta would be a good companion.

"Puk-puk, puk-puk — such a gossip, we need to teach Henrietta a lesson!" And all day the new hens strutted around the yard, they stopped and clucked with Fredericka, Raveena, Rosetta and Brunettia. Soon they had formed a plan, and all the hens agreed to change their activities the next day.

And when the sun began to set, they all headed back into the roost. "Puk-puk, puk-puk — what a beautiful day it will be tomorrow, and what a fun day it will be!"

The next morning the hens clucked quietly in their nests, keeping their eyes shut tight against the bright sunlight. Henrietta,

who was waiting for Fredericka and Raveena to wake up, finally decided to lead the hens herself down the ramp. "Pawk-pawk, pawk-pawk — so lazy, so slow this morning!" she announced to the early morning air. She pecked and she pecked and she pecked. Still the other hens did not join her. "Pawk-pawk, pawk-pawk — there will be that much more for me, much more for me I see!"

Farmer Fred, who had just finished milking his three cows, could not understand why the hens were not out in the yard. He poked his nose into the hen house, and was surprised to see them clucking, and chuckling it seemed, as they began to slowly walk out onto the ramp. Scratching his head he knew he had to tell Lilly. Later, sitting on the rocking chair, he asked if she could bring out some tea for them.

"So early! Of course." She listened to Farmer Fred's story about the hens and agreed that it was indeed very strange for the hens to act this way! So they watched what would happen next.

Henrietta, who had eaten her fill, eyed the other hens as they joined her in the yard. Well, they didn't quite join her. Raveena and Fredericka strutted to the very far end of the yard. Rosetta and Brunettia strutted away with the new hens to near the garden. No one had said so much as a "puk-puk, puk-puk — good morning, good morning Henrietta," to her as they strutted into the yard.

Henrietta strutted over to Raveena and Fredericka, "puk-puk, puk-puk — good morning, good morning to you. Aren't we sleepy heads this fine morning. Puk-puk, puk-puk — and aren't Rosetta and Brunettia being snug with the new hens this morning."

Raveena and Fredericka continued clucking and pecking. They seemed to not have heard Henrietta. Henrietta, twitched her head, and eyed them closely. And saying in a louder raspy voice "puk-puk, puk-puk — good morning, good morning to you. Aren't we sleepy heads this fine morning. Puk-puk, puk-puk — and aren't Rosetta and Brunettia being snug with the new hens this morning." Still Raveena and Fredericka continued to cluck and to peck. Again they seemed to not have heard Henrietta. They ignored her.

Farmer Fred and Lilly watched with great curiosity as Henrietta strutted across the yard to where Rosetta and Brunettia and the new hens were pecking. As soon as Henrietta reached them, the new hens strutted slowly away to join Raveena and Fredericka! Rosetta and Brunettia turned their backs on her, ignoring Henrietta's "puk-puk, puk-puk — good morning, good morning to you. Aren't we sleepy heads this fine morning. Puk-puk, puk-puk — and aren't Raveena and Fredericka being snug with the new hens this morning."

Rosetta and Brunettia continued clucking and pecking. They seemed to not have heard Henrietta. Henrietta, twitched her head, and eyed them closely. And saying in a louder raspy voice "puk-puk, puk-puk — good morning, good morning to you. Aren't we sleepy heads this fine morning. Puk-puk, puk-puk — and aren't Raveena and Fredericka being snug with the new hens this morning." Still Rosetta and Brunettia continued to cluck and to peck. Again they seemed to have not heard Henrietta. They too were ignoring her.

At this Henrietta flew up angrily and raged across the yard. "Pk-pk-pawk! Pk-pk-Pawk! What is wrong with you? Can you not hear me?" And Henrietta squawked as she strutted; and she strutted as she squawked. "Pk-pk-pawk! Pk-pk-Pawk! Why won't you talk to me?" And in her rage, she flew right into the fence!

"Oh my gosh!" exclaimed Lilly. "Oh my woolly whiskers!" exclaimed Farmer Fred. They rushed down and picked up Henrietta, who was a bit dazed.

A very subdued Henrietta looked sadly at the other hens and whispered "myuh-rych, myuh-rych — I am so sore, I am so sore."

And Farmer Fred picked her up and placed her in a box on the porch. He noticed that one of Henrietta's eyes was closed. He and Lilly would keep a close eye on her. The other hens strutted away, clucking and pecking. They would now be at peace for a while.

Henrietta watched from the porch through her one good eye. The other hens seemed to be content, strutting together back and forth across the yard. Fredericka pecked twice as fast as Raveena, Rosetta, Brunettia and the new hens.

It did not seem to bother any of them that she was gone, as they clucked and pecked together happily. She heard the new hens talking of their last home, and of the dog that chased them around the yard. She heard Raveena tell Fredericka how difficult it was sometimes to keep her black feathers shining so nicely. And Fredericka agreed that she found it difficult to keep her feathers so smooth and white. Henrietta heard all the clucking.

Then she thought, it is only when I am with them that they squawk and squawk. She closed her eyes and sadly thought about how she had gossiped. She thought of the times that they had asked her to stop speaking unkindly about them. She thought about how she had acted that morning.

"Pk-pk-puk. Pk-pk-puk — I'm sorry, I'm sorry to have gossiped in such a mean manner!" she said to them all. They did not appear to be listening. So Henrietta said in a louder rasp, "Pk-pk-puk. Pk-pk-puk — I'm sorry, I'm sorry to have gossiped in such a mean manner! Pk-pk-puk. Pk-pk-puk — I was unkind to you, I was very unkind to you." Then they all had heard her. And hens, being hens, do not hold a grudge. They all welcomed Henrietta back into the brood.

"Pk-pk-puk. Pk-pk-puk — we hope you are feeling better, we hope you will strut again soon!" And then one-by-one Raveena, Fredericka, Rosetta, Brunettia and all the hens strutted up to the porch where Henrietta was, and dropped a kernel of corn for her next to the box.

"Oh my gosh!" exclaimed Lilly. "Oh my woolly whiskers!" exclaimed Farmer Fred as Henrietta clucked softly and slowly began to peck at the corn.

W
N
S
E

ABC

# Alphabet Dreams

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Two small girls were lying on a blanket in the shade of a lilac tree, quietly coloring in their alphabet book. Their little feet were poking up behind them, their toes tickled by the warm breeze. Mina and Emma were both four years old and just beginning to learn about letters in their kindergarten class. Both loved to color the different letters with bright colors of red, blue, yellow and green. Sometimes they shaded the spaces in between with pink, orange and purple crayons. The pictures were bright and the letters were almost jumping off the pages!

Mina liked to tell stories about the letters. "*A* is my favorite letter," giggling as she said, "It's in bat, cat, sat." Emma repeated "sat, cat, bat," and Mina giggled again. The two colored and sang out words that made other funny sounds: "boom - zoom, fun - sun, dog - frog," and on and on they giggled and sang.

That night, Emma's mother read to her before going to sleep. Emma noticed that some words had letters that repeated — tr*ee*, b*ee*, thr*ee*, k*ee*p with '*ee*', and sp*oo*n, m*oo*n, br*oo*m with '*oo*'. As she closed her eyes, she began to dream. Letters were dancing through her head and telling their own story. She saw the red letters *'e'* and 's', and she imagined that she was wearing a r*e*d dr*e*ss to kindergarten class. In her dream Mina was singing a funny song about *three bees in a tree*.

"Emma," called her Mom the next morning, "let's put on your blue jeans and sweater that are on the chair." Emma, still sleepy-eyed, remembered her dream.

"But Mom, I want to wear my red dress." She was pulling the chair over to the closet to pull the dress off the hanger. Her mother was surprised; Emma never seemed too interested in what she wore.

"Mom, Mina can sing *three bees in a tree*. Can you sing it?"

"No, I don't know that song. Maybe you can ask Mina to teach it to you." Emma quickly ate her breakfast and could not wait to walk

to school to see Mina. On the way to school, she sang *three bees in a tree* to each step.

"Emma", called Mina as she ran to meet her friend, "Let's play with my ball!" Emma dropped her schoolbag, and then remembered what she wanted to ask her friend.

"Mina, can you teach me the '*three bees in a tree*' song?" Mina did not know the song, so she made one up!

Giggling she repeated, "*Three bees in a tree, three bees in a tree.*" Skipping along she sang "*Bzzz, bzzz three bees in a tree.*" Mina and Emma made up a song about three bees buzzing from flower to flower high up in a tree. They were excited to tell the teacher about their new song.

*Three bees in a tree, three bees in a tree*
*Bzzz, bzzz, buzz three bees in a tree*
*Bzzz, bzzz, buzz on pink flowers*
*One! Two! Three!*
*Bzzz, bzzz, buzz high up in a tree.*

At school the teacher told them stories with letters '*a*' and '*l*'. "*All* is a fun word, and can be part of many words. You know that some of you are sm*all*, and others are t*all*; and that makes *all* of you just fine! *All* is found in short words, like *ball, call, fall*, and w*all*.

*All* can be found as well in big words like *marshmall*ow and sw*all*ow." Mina and Emma listened closely to the teacher. They loved to learn how small words are found within big words.

That night Emma's mother read her favorite nursery rhymes to her before going to bed:

"Teddy bear, teddy bear, Turn around!
Teddy bear, teddy bear, Touch the ground!
Teddy bear, teddy bear, Jump up high!
Teddy bear, teddy bear, Touch the sky!

Teddy bear, teddy bear, Bend down low!
Teddy bear, teddy bear, Touch your toes!
Teddy bear, teddy bear, Turn out the light!
Teddy bear, teddy bear, Say good night!"

"Oh, there are so many funny sounds. And if I close my eyes I can see them in pictures!" exclaimed Emma. That night Emma dreamed of teddy bears, and imagined that she and Mina were drawing them.

On Saturday morning Emma went to play with Mina at her house. Together they looked at the rhyme book and found funny words to draw. "Let's draw *Pirouette cacaouette*, the peanut man," said Mina, as she began drawing a peanut.

"I'll color his house," said Emma, "and I'll draw his funny paper stairs too." The two little girls colored pictures until it was time to play outside.

They were drawing chalk pictures on the sidewalk when Emma found an envelope with a stamp on it. "Look Mina, someone dropped a letter."

"Oh, I know where the grey mailbox is. My mother goes by there when she walks to school with me. Let's go mail it." And so the two little girls walked hand-in-hand down the street, and then not finding the mailbox, they turned down another street. And as they walked and looked for the mailbox, they walked further away from home — one step at a time, one street at a time!

Meanwhile back home, the little girls did not answer when Mina's mother called them. She thought they were hiding so she looked around the front yard and the back yard, and then she looked up and down the street. She could not see them. She called Emma's Mom, and they called their neighbors and friends. But no one had seen them. They were very worried because the girls never left the yard. They decided to get their car, and they drove around the streets, but still did not see the girls. Finally they called the community police. The officers soon organized the neighbors to help

the police search the streets again between Mina and Emma's homes. The girls were not to be found!

It was just starting to get dark when Emma and Mina finally found the grey mailbox, and they quickly mailed their letter. "Oh good, now we can go home," said Emma. But looking around she could not remember which way to go. "I think my Mom and Dad are going to be very angry with me if we don't get home soon."

Mina agreed that her parents were not going to be happy with her either. "My Mom always tells me to stay in the yard. I'm getting cold. I'm hungry!" She was afraid, and she did not recognize the street they were on.

Lights were turned on inside the houses. But they did not know which way to go. They were lost! They held hands as they walked up one street and down another. They walked more slowly as they tried to find their way home. But everything looked different. The trees had very dark branches, and there were scary shadows all around them from the street lights.

Suddenly Mina saw her parents' red car driving towards them. Both girls began to wave. Mina was so happy to finally see them.

The car stopped and both Moms ran to hug Mina and Emma. "Where did you go?" they asked.

"We wanted to mail a letter," said Emma.

"We found a letter on the sidewalk," said Mina.

"And we couldn't find the mailbox," they both said together. And then they began to cry.

Their Moms gave them another big hug. Mina's Mom said, "We were afraid too. We did not know where you were. You must never leave home without me or your father. You must always tell us where you are, or if you are going away to play with a friend."

Emma's Mom also told Emma to never leave the place where she should be without first asking her. "I won't do it again," Emma cried. "We were scared when we couldn't find our way back home. The mailbox was so far, and we were getting tired and hungry."

When they arrived at Mina's house the girls were surprised by all the neighbors who had been out looking for them. And when they saw the police car, they became very shy at all the attention. They promised the policeman that they would never leave home alone again!

Both Moms agreed that it would be good to draw street signs for the girls to recognize if they should be lost again. And the girls learned to read the name of their street as well as learning the streets around them. Soon they had fun making more word signs — for the store, playground, school and library.

A few days later, Emma's mother brought the children to visit the library. *Making the signs had helped both girls to print words and to read so fast,* she thought. Emma and Mina agreed to join the children's reading hour and asked for a new library card. "Let's bring home some story books," said Mina.

"Yes, we can put them in our book basket," agreed Emma. They chose picture books on plants and animals. And so both Mina and Emma began to discover new words and stories which they liked to share.

This Library Card belongs to Emma.

Emma agrees:

- to borrow books from the library.
- to be careful with the books.
- to return the books to the library on time.

This Library Card belongs to Mina.

Mina agrees:

- to borrow books from the library.
- to be careful with the books.
- to return the books to the library on time.

ABC

# The Mouse in the House

Missy Mouse was glaring at her litter — six boys and four girls! She was blocking the doorway of her home which was hidden in the walls — at the floor near the door in the room that kept the broom. She had just been in the kitchen eating crumbs behind the bread box when she heard Lilly, Farmer Fred's wife, complain. "The mice are at it again! My nice new bonnet has been chewed up. I think we need to bring the cat back indoors. She will help us catch them."

Missy Mouse did not wait to hear Farmer Fred's reply. She scurried down the wall to the floor and ran behind the furniture all the way to the room that kept the broom. Sliding right on the floor into the hole in the wall, she was relieved to see that all the litter were inside waiting for her, as she had told them to do. Her little head turned all sides as she asked them who had been eating Lilly's new bonnet. She looked from one to the other, and not one would answer. "Did you eat the bonnet?" she asked them one-by-one. "No!" they squeaked one-by-one, looking up with their beady little eyes.

Except for Shrimp — the smallest of the litter — he was hiding his face with his little front feet. "Shrimp, do you know what happened to the new bonnet?" she asked.

Shrimp would not tell a lie, could not tell a lie. Looking up he said, "Yesterday I was near there, and all I know is that I heard a mouse chewing on the bonnet. I don't know who, but I know that it sounded like…" and he stopped. His brothers and sisters were all looking at him. He was afraid to continue.

Missy was not happy with the bunch. "Now listen. You cannot go around chewing up what does not belong to you. You can only chew and chew and chew outside the farmer's house. Do you all promise to do that?" She needed to make them understand that she was serious!

"If the farmer and his wife decide to bring in the cat because of your chewing, then the cat will chase us every night when we go out to eat. The cat will sleep near our home during the day. The cat will smell us and follow us until she catches us and eats us!" The mice were wide-eyed in fear. "Do you understand?" They all nodded 'yes'.

The next day Missy was nibbling on crumbs caught in the rug under the kitchen table. The farmer's wife began to complain to her husband. "The mice have been in the bread box eating the new loaf of bread!" Lilly said. "I think we really need to bring the cat back inside now."

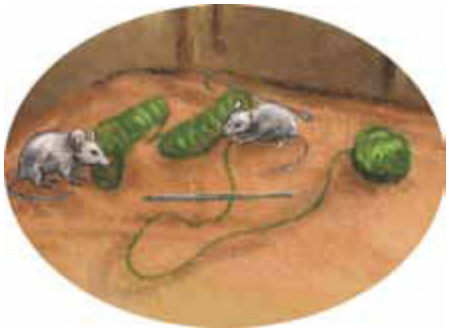
"I'll set some traps up first and see if that will catch the culprits," replied Farmer Fred. And he left to check to see if the traps were in the tool shed outside. Missy quietly scooted to the room with the broom. Quickly she slid through the hole in the wall and counted her litter. They were all there.

Her little head turned to all sides as she asked them who had been eating the new loaf of bread. She looked from one to the other, and not one would answer. "Did you eat the bread loaf?" she asked them one-by-one. "No!" they squeaked one-by-one, looking up with beady little eyes.

Except for Shrimp — the smallest of the litter — he was hiding his face with his little front feet. "Shrimp, do you know who was eating the bread loaf?" she asked.

Shrimp would not tell a lie, simply could not tell a lie. Looking up he said, "Yesterday I was near there, and all I know is that I heard a mouse nibbling on the bread loaf. I don't know who, but I know that it sounded like…" and he stopped. His brothers and sisters were looking down at him. He was afraid to continue.

Missy was not at all happy with her bunch. "Now listen. You cannot go around nibbling on a new bread loaf that the farmer's wife wants to have for her own supper. You can only nibble on crumbs that have dropped to the floor in the kitchen or pantry, or that are under the toaster. Do you all promise to do that?" "Yes," they nodded. She needed to make them understand that she was serious!



"If the farmer and his wife decide to bring in the cat, the cat will chase us every night when we go out to eat. The cat will sleep near our home during the day. The cat will smell us and follow us until she catches us and eats us!" Once again the mice were wide-eyed in fear. "Do you understand?" They all nodded 'yes'. "You must promise to go outside to nibble on food." And they all promised.

Early the next morning Missy was nosing around the pantry floor. She was finding all kinds of crumbs that had fallen to the

ground. Then she heard the farmer's wife complain. This time the farmer's wife called to her husband who was working outside, "Fred! Bring in the cat! Bring in the cat!" She was very upset. "The mice have gnawed at the slippers that I knitted for the child. The mice have nibbled at the cheese I left on the counter next to the toaster. They have eaten the loaf of bread in the pantry. Enough! Enough! Bring in the cat now!"

Missy quickly scooted to the room with the broom. Quickly she zoomed through the hole in the wall and counted her litter. They were all there.

Her little head turned to all sides as she asked them who had been gnawing at the slippers that the farmer's wife had knitted for the child. And who had nibbled at the cheese left on the counter next to the toaster? She looked from one to the other, and not one would answer. "Did you gnaw at the slippers that the farmer's wife had knitted for the child? And did you nibble at the cheese left on the counter next to the toaster?" she asked them one-by-one. "No!" they squeaked one-by-one, looking up with beady little eyes.

Except for Shrimp — the smallest of the litter — he was hiding his face with his little front feet. "Shrimp, do you know who gnawed at the slippers? Do you know who nibbled at the cheese?" she asked.

Shrimp would not tell a lie, simply could not tell a lie. Looking up he said, "Yesterday I was near there, and all I know is that I heard a mouse gnawing at the slippers. And I heard a mouse nibbling at the cheese. I don't know who, but I know that it sounded like…" and he stopped. His brothers and sisters were looking down at him. He was afraid to continue.

Missy looked at all her litter. "I must know who has been doing this. I need to know the truth."

She was sad. "The farmer's wife is bringing in the cat. The cat will chase us all night when we go out to eat. The cat will sleep near our home during the day. The cat will smell us and follow us until she catches us and eats us!" The mice looked up, wide-eyed with fear.

And she continued, "The cat will first smell out the mouse who chewed the bonnet, then the mouse who ate the bread loaf. With her very keen sense of smell, she will track the mouse who gnawed at the slippers, and then she will find the mouse who nibbled the

cheese. And she will chase me too because I have been nibbling on crumbs all over the kitchen and pantry."

She bowed her little head, "So I am moving to another home. Those of you who gnawed, nibbled and chewed will also need to leave with me today. The rest of you must remain hidden here until the cat is back outside again."

And so Missy prepared to leave through the crack in the wall. When she looked back to say good-bye to her litter, she was surprised to see that they were all right behind her! Only Shrimp remained behind.

"Did you all gnaw, nibble and chew?"

"Yes!" they replied in a chorus. This time they would not lie, they simply could not lie.

"And did Shrimp know that it was you who gnawed, nibbled and chewed?" she asked.

"Yes!" they said.

Missy went back and nuzzled Shrimp's nose. "Shrimp, come with us. We'll find a new home soon." And with that Missy Mouse and her litter left their home in the wall — at the floor near the

door of the room with the broom.  They all left once and for all. And the farmer's wife was finally rid of the mouse in the house.

That night Ginger the cat prowled and growled, and growled and prowled around the house, looking in the kitchen, looking in the pantry, and looking in the room with the broom for a mouse.  But she never found one!

# The Girl in the Mirror

Katie rubbed her eyes as she tried to stop crying. In the mirror she saw the little girl looking so sad. She had tears running over her little red cheeks. Katie wanted her to feel better. "Don't cry. He won't hit me again."

"What happened?" asked the girl in the mirror. "Why did he hit you? And how do you know he won't hurt you again?"

Katie thought about this as she washed her face. She didn't want her Mom and Dad, or her brother, to see that she had been crying. "A big boy was waiting for me on my way home from school. He was hiding behind a bush. And when he saw me, he ran out and punched me in the stomach real hard. I couldn't breathe. Like this…" as Katie swung her little fist through the air. "Then he pushed me down on the sidewalk and took my ball away from me."

"How do you know he won't hurt you again?" sadly asked the mirror girl who insisted on knowing. She sighed deeply, afraid to look at her reflection in the mirror.

"The big boy told me not to tell anyone what he had done — and if I gave him what he asked for next time — that he would not

hurt me again. He told me to give him some of Robbie's marbles tomorrow at recess." Katie began quietly crying all over again. She was afraid her Mom might hear her and ask what was wrong. "I can't tell anyone because the big boy said it was a secret, that he would hit me again if I told. So I can't tell anyone."

The mirror girl looked back at her unhappily. She whispered, "Katie, you can't let a big boy force you to keep a bad secret. Don't be afraid. I think you should tell your Mom and Dad what happened on your way home from school. Tell them who the boy is who hurt you. And tell them that you are afraid that he will hurt you again." She paused to see if Katie was listening to her.

"I am afraid. What if I don't give him the marbles tomorrow at recess? He will probably wait for me and punch me again." Katie was very afraid of what could happen.

The mirror girl looked back at Katie with a stubborn look on her face. "Your Mom and Dad love you and will protect you. You know that this is a bad secret because it is a secret that can hurt you. Good secrets — like a surprise birthday party — are about happy things. So you need to tell them about this bad secret and about what happened. They will find a solution to help you and to

stop him from hitting you again." She sounded so sure of herself that Katie began to think that the mirror girl was right.

Katie kissed the palm of her hand and then put it flat to the mirror with a smile for the mirror girl. Wiping her face carefully, she already felt better knowing what she would do.

After supper she told Robbie what happened. He was angry with the big boy and already knew him to be mean to other boys in the school yard. He went with Katie to tell their Mom and Dad. Katie told them how she had just said good-bye to her best friend, and was continuing to walk home when he jumped out and punched her. She told them how he pushed her down and took her ball too. "He told me not to tell anyone or he would punch me again. It was a secret, he said." And Katie began to cry all over again, she was so scared.

"Oh Katie," her Mom hugged her close, "secrets that can hurt you are bad secrets. You must always tell us, or tell someone who can help you when there is a bad secret."

Katie's Dad thought about everything. He said that they would go to the school the next morning with Katie. They would talk with the school Principal who would decide what they should do to stop the bullying. "Don't worry anymore about this Katie. Tomorrow Robbie will wait for you and you will come home together, right Robbie? And no fighting!"

"Yes Dad. And maybe some of my friends can come with us too for a while." Robbie was already thinking of asking Paul and Jeremy to walk with them. They might even take a different route home for a while.

The next morning they all went to talk with the Principal. They told him what had happened the day before to Katie, and they asked his advice on how to stop the bullying. The Principal was very concerned for Katie and he promised them that he would do everything he could to keep her and the other children safe from harm. He also thanked her for having the courage to speak to him. "I know the boy. He is new to the school and the area, and does not seem to make friends easily."

Robbie thought about that for a minute. It couldn't be easy to make friends in a new school; he thought that the boy must be very lonely. He asked if he could be introduced to him. "What is his name? And where does he come from?" he asked.

"His name is Andras, and he has just arrived from overseas," replied the Principal. "At recess I will introduce him to you and your friends. Maybe you could include him in your games and get to know each other." Mom and Dad were surprised and pleased with Robbie's idea.

"You are right Robbie, Andras needs a friend," said Dad. The Principal smiled and thanked Katie's parents for their trust in him to take care of things.

"Andras," called the Principal as the boy entered the schoolyard at recess, "can you come over?" Andras joined the Principal and the two walked over to the fence. "You know Andras, hitting the little girl yesterday was not a nice thing to do. You hurt her badly, and she is very afraid of you. You cannot act this way," he said as he looked at the boy.

Andras kept his head down and was scared of what the Principal would do. "Please, I will return her ball. Just don't tell my parents. They would be very angry with me."

The Principal agreed that his parents would be very disappointed to hear about what their son had done. "This time I just need you to promise that you won't hurt anyone again. Can you promise me that?" he asked, looking sternly down at the boy.

"Yes, I promise," he answered.

The Principal nodded and seemed satisfied with his answer. "Andras, I want you to meet Robbie and his friends. Robbie is the little girl's older brother and he would like you to play soccer with them at recess. Would you like to play soccer with them?" he asked.

Andras nodded yes. When he met Robbie he said "I'm really sorry that I hit your sister. And I will return her ball to you as well."

Robbie looked at Andras and said that he would need to say he was sorry to Katie as well. "You also need to promise that you won't hurt anyone else again if you want to play on our soccer team."

"I promise," replied Andras. Later he saw Katie and told her he was sorry for having hit her. He also gave her back her ball. He felt so ashamed of what he had done when he saw how small she was standing next to him. He made a promise to himself never to hit anyone again.

During the afternoon recess Andras joined Robbie and the soccer team for another quick game. The boys were happy to learn new techniques from each other.

And that afternoon Katie told the girl in the mirror that after Mom and Dad had spoken to the Principal, the big boy apologized to her. "He said he was sorry and that he would never hurt me again. I am so glad that I told them. I also know now that a bad secret should never be a secret. If a secret will hurt me, then it is not just a secret — it is a bad secret."

"Katie, supper's ready!" called her Mom. Katie kissed her hand and touched the mirror — the girl in the mirror was smiling back to her. "See you later," she said.

# I Can Do This !

Léo, Patrick and Kevin were in the playground — jumping, running and laughing as they kicked their ball around. "Hey!" called Kevin as Léo kicked the ball out from under his feet. He didn't really care though because this was the very first day of their summer vacation. "Can you guys come over to my house tomorrow?" he asked his friends. Kevin wanted to plan new and different activities for the summer with them.

"I'll have to ask my Mom," said Léo. Patrick thought that his mother would agree. She always liked when he visited with his friends.

The next morning Kevin told Patrick and Léo about his plan, and he needed their help. "I want to do all kinds of new things during our vacation. I want to learn the road signs; my Mom said that when I knew them, I could ride my bicycle to the park with her. I want to read books on whales and other animals. I want to grow tiny tomatoes in flower pots — I just love to eat those small tomatoes." He looked at his friends and asked, "What would you guys like to do — it has to be something new. And it doesn't matter if we have never done it before because we can learn as we do it."

Léo didn't think that growing tomatoes was so much fun. His Mom had a big garden with lots of tomatoes last year, and he helped her to pick them and that was a lot of work. But he liked his friend Kevin, so he agreed to help make a list of new things to do. "I would like to build a fort, but we would need to learn how to nail the boards together. Do you think we could do that?" Both Kevin and Patrick liked the idea. "My Dad has lots of old boards behind the shed, and I'm sure we could borrow a hammer and nails," added Léo. "He would need to teach us how to cut the wood with a saw."

Patrick wondered if they could also build a go-cart to roll down the small hill behind Léo's house. "Maybe our Dads could help us find wagon wheels and a steering wheel," he added. "Can we also do trips this summer? I really like visiting the Science Museum… we could even get more ideas of new things to do there."

"I think we need to make a list," said Kevin. "We need a list of things we can do and of the new things we can learn."

"We need to also list what tools and materials we have in our homes and what we need to get to do the new projects," added Léo. They were so busy planning that they forgot about lunch until Kevin's Mom brought out some sandwiches and cookies for them.

"What shall we do first?" they wondered. Kevin suggested preparing flower pots to plant the tomato seeds. "If we start now, we can be eating tomatoes before we go back to school. It will be fun seeing how fast the plants grow!"

They all agreed and looked for clay pots in the garden shed. They began digging earth to fill the pots. Once they were filled they placed them in a sunny location in the back yard. Léo added 'buy tomato seeds' to their Project list. Then he added 'buy zucchini seeds'— he loved when his mother made zucchini cake!

That night they continued to work on their lists. They agreed they wanted many fun things to do. They called it their 'Can-Do List', because by the end of the summer they wanted to say "I can do this" for whatever was on the list! Patrick thought that he could find some good ideas from a science experiment book. "I remember seeing how to make a volcano with *papier maché*. It was really cool. And I have a nature book that shows how to make different kinds of bird houses." He was starting to be excited by all the possibilities of what they could do. "Maybe we should start with 10 things to do," he said.

Patrick laughed as he remembered that his older sister had been in trouble with their Mom when she had made a volcano in the kitchen. "We'll need to make our volcano outside because it makes

such a mess!" he told his friends. Later that week they compared their lists again, they were very surprised and happy with all the new ideas. And this is what their first summer list looked like:

| 'Can-Do List' #1<br>for Kevin, Léo and Patrick | | |
|---|---|---|
| Project | Need | Can Do √ |
| Plant tomatoes | Tomato and zucchini seeds | |
| Build a fort | Wood, hammer and nails | |
| Build a go-cart | Wood, wheels, steering wheel | |
| Read books | Library card | |
| Visit museums | Pass to visit | |
| Learn road safety | Pictures of road safety signs | |
| Go fishing. | Fishing rod, worms, ice box | |
| Make a volcano <u>outside</u> | Papier maché, detergent, food coloring, baking soda, vinegar | |
| Build a bird house | Wood, glue, black marker | |
| Ride bicycle to the park | Permission to ride to the park | |

When the boys showed their list to their Moms and Dads, everyone agreed that it would be a fun and interesting summer for them all.

With the permission of all the other parents, Léo's Dad and his Uncle Louis surprised the boys by taking them on an overnight fishing trip. It was their first time camping together — and their first summer adventure! The adults helped the boys organize their packs, meals and sleeping gear. Soon they were driving to the lake, and by the time they arrived they had talked about every kind of fish they wanted to catch: "bass, pike, pickerel, trout, tuna and haddock!"

Kevin asked, "Do you think we might catch a salmon? I love when my mom cooks salmon on the barbecue!" Uncle Louis was smiling as he thought of the sunfish, perch and brook trout that they might catch at the creek.

"Okay everyone," said Léo's Dad when they began exploring the camp site, "we all need to help put up the tents. Unpack your gear." The boys were surprised by all the long poles that were used to hold up the tents. As they unpacked their gear, Patrick gave Kevin and Léo each a new scrapbook that his Mom had bought for them.

"My Mom wants us to write about all our adventures this summer, to make drawings of special outings — what we see, what we like —, and to glue in any pictures we find, or pamphlets." They were all excited by this and thought it would be fun to compare their scrapbooks at the end of the summer. They might even bring them to class when the teacher asked what they did during the summer.

Uncle Louis and the boys collected firewood, and dry moss, twigs and pinecones to start the fire. "What are we eating Dad?" asked Léo. He wanted to roast marshmallows over the fire.

"We're having spaghetti and hotdogs with the works!" laughed his Dad. Léo explained that 'the works' was everything that went onto the hotdog. "You can even put chips and pickles and cheese on your hotdog!"

Just before dark all the birds in the trees around them began to chirp at the same time, and once the sun went down, they became quiet and slept. And that's when the frogs in the creek began to croak. "It's a song fest!" The boys were very surprised by how loud they could be as they covered their ears from the shrill noise.

Sitting around the campfire, Uncle Louis explained how in the morning they would walk to the creek at the further end of the lake, and fish near a grassy area. "The fish like to hide in the long

grasses; and if we are lucky we might catch a nice big pike." They all talked about catching the biggest fish, or who was to catch the most. Just before going to bed, they helped to carefully put out the campfire.

"Wow! Look at those stars… there are so many," exclaimed Patrick, as he looked up at the night sky.

"Let's find the Big Dipper," said Kevin. They pointed to many stars before they finally climbed into their sleeping bags. As they were falling to sleep, they could smell the last wisps of smoke from the wet embers and hear small animals skittering in the woods around them. They imagined raccoons, skunks and mice sniffing around their tent.

They whispered to each other: "Are there bears and wolves around here?" An owl hooted as if to answer them! They snuggled far, far down into their sleeping bags as they thought about that. And finally all went to sleep.

Early next morning the boys heard Léo's Dad making breakfast on the fire. Soon they were dressed, eating and happy to see their fishing lines leaning against a tree. Uncle Louis had already packed the fish bait, lunch, water and a first aid kit. After breakfast they followed Uncle Louis' 'secret trail' to the fishing creek. The boys followed single file as the bushes were as tall as they were!

Through the forest, up a hill, down a hill, and then they saw a clearing at the edge of a large creek. Good thing they all wore rubber boots because the ground was very soggy. Uncle Louis showed them how to put a big squirmy worm on a hook, and then they had to practice doing it themselves.

"YIEW!" exclaimed Patrick and Kevin. The boys slowly picked up their worm and practiced putting it on the fishing hook.

"That's it. See you can do this. It is tricky but you will get better at it by the end of today," said Léo's Dad. They all spread out and learned how to throw the line in the water and to slowly reel

it back in. The boys found this difficult to do since they often caught their line in the weeds. Uncle Louis showed them how to jiggle the hook loose, reel the line in and cast the line out again.

Suddenly Kevin screamed: "I got one! I got one! A really big fish!" Uncle Louis told him to slowly reel in the line, and to keep the line in the water.

"I'll get the net to take him out." They all gathered round to admire this first 'catch' of the day — a small six inch perch. Now the boys were really excited. There really were fish in the creek.

By the end of the day a small pile of perch and one nice pike were placed in the cooler, ready to cook for supper. The boys headed back to the camp, tired and happy with their very first fishing adventure.

That night, they used their small flashlights to check off activities on their 'Can-Do List' — going fishing and planting tomato seeds.

Then they began to write about their fishing trip.

"I'm going to draw my big fish," said Kevin and wrote about how good the fish tasted. Léo drew a picture of Uncle Louis cleaning the fish, and of Dad cooking it over the fire. And Patrick drew pictures

of all the things they needed for the camping trip, including the squiggly worms! Then, saying goodnight and snuggling deep, deep down in their sleeping bags, they all agreed that this was going to be an awesome summer!

| 'Can-Do List' #1<br>for Kevin, Léo and Patrick | | |
|---|---|---|
| Project | Need | Can Do √ |
| Plant tomatoes | Tomato and zucchini seeds | √ |
| Build a fort | Wood, hammer and nails | |
| Build a go-cart | Wood, wheels, steering wheel | |
| Read books | Library card | √ |
| Visit museums | Pass to visit | |
| Learn road safety | Pictures of road safety signs | √ |
| Go fishing. | Fishing rod, worms, ice box | √ |
| Make a volcano <u>outside</u> | Papier maché, detergent, food coloring, baking soda, vinegar | |
| Build a bird house | Wood, glue, black marker | √ |
| Ride bicycle to the park | Permission to ride to the park | |

# The Impish Squirrel

The woods were alive with activity on this beautiful sunny spring morning. The wind felt like a soft breeze as it wandered through the trees. And the deer and fox families were already drinking at the flowing river near the edge of the forest.

Old Mr. Yurtle the turtle was sitting on a log chewing his breakfast, and watched as the busy squirrels dug up nuts that were hidden under the leaves. He was always amazed that they could even find them after the long winter. One little squirrel, called Bushy, was playing as usual. Mr. Yurtle knew that Bushy did not help the others to find nuts to bring back to the nest. All Bushy wanted to do was play, chase his tail, run around in circles, and tease the other squirrels.

Mother Scurry tried to teach Bushy to smell out the nuts. "Bushy, keep your nose to the ground, look around you and smell where a nut is buried. It has an 'acorn' smell." Every day she would teach her small litter — Chuck, Dash and Bushy — something new. Only Bushy was not keen to learn. He would rather play!

Bushy began taking the nuts that belonged to other squirrels and said that he had found them! His mother was sad to know that he took the nuts from Chuck and Dash.

Today Mother Scurry was teaching her young ones to jump from branch to branch. "When there is an animal on the ground that might catch you, then you need to climb a tree and travel on the branches," she said. Chuck and Dash practiced running along tree limbs, and bravely followed her as she jumped through the air from limb to limb. Soon they had traveled from one end of the woods to the other and back again! Except for Bushy!

Bushy sat on a pine branch munching on a pinecone. "Bushy, you must practice with us," called Mother. "Come with us now, we will practice walking on wires. You need to be able to do this when we go near the houses."

Bushy pretended not to hear. He continued to sit and munch on his pinecone. While he sat lazily on the branch, the other squirrels practiced walking on wires, jumping off branches, and finding nuts.

Day after day Chuck and Dash grew more agile and soon could find buried nuts all over the forest floor. They chased each other

over the wires, jumping onto trees and discovered fast ways to travel around the woods.

Except for Bushy who enjoyed sitting on the pine tree or on the log with Mr. Yurtle looking at the river drift by.

Near the end of the summer when the evenings were cooler, Mother Scurry said to her litter, "Soon you will need to find a new nest to prepare for winter. I have shown you how to build a warm nest with leaves. Now all you need to do is find a good tree in which to build it." Chuck and Dash were excited by this news. They would have their very own nest! They could also make it very cozy with feathers and leaves. Mother Scurry continued, "Once your nest is done, then you can start hoarding nuts and berries for the winter."

Even the mention of winter did not move Bushy. He thought that he would manage winter very nicely by visiting Chuck and Dash — or Mother — when he was hungry.

One early morning Mother Scurry told her family that they would have a contest to see how well they had learned new skills that summer. "Today you will have a race! You will start at the big

pine tree at the edge of the woods, and you will race to the first house at the other end of the forest. You can run on the ground or high up in the trees. When you reach the house, you will use the wires to go to the end of the street, cross to the other side of the street and return using any way you wish. I will be waiting for you at the big pine tree."

And with that the excited squirrels scurried off towards the woods. The race was on!

Except for Bushy. He liked the idea of a race, but he had other plans as he headed to the river. "Good morning Mr. Yurtle," he said. "I would very much like it if you could give me a ride down the river to the houses."

Mr. Yurtle, who had seen the squirrels racing to the woods, was not surprised by Bushy's request. But since he had not been down river for a while, he said, "Hop on my back! We'll see how far we can go."

He slowly slid into the water with Bushy sitting smugly on his back.

Mother Scurry looked on from the water's edge, curious to see how far Bushy would get. Then she remembered that she had more important things to do. She began scurrying around to dig up nuts to bring to the pine tree. Her young squirrels would be hungry after their race!

Bushy was quite pleased as he and Mr. Yurtle drifted downstream. "What a relaxing way to travel! The flowers and bushes look so nice along the edge of the river!" Bushy beamed at Mr. Yurtle. Bushy saw some fish in the water and waved to the frogs sitting on big green lily-pads that floated on the water.

Mr. Yurtle slowly drifted and paddled along. He saw a nice log near the river's edge. He thought that it might be nice to sun awhile, and he paddled towards it. "I will rest a bit," he told Bushy. And being such a warm day, Bushy dozed too!

After a nice nap, both Bushy and Mr. Yurtle floated slowly on their way.

"Oh no!" exclaimed Mr. Yurtle.

"Oh no!" echoed Bushy. They had gone around a bend in the river only to see rocky rapids! There had been so little rain that summer that the water level had gone down and created fast-flowing rapids.

"Hang on!" yelled Mr. Yurtle. He drew his head and legs into his shell as they flew down the rapids. Bushy was petrified! Bushy was terrified! Bushy was horrified! He dug his little claws into the turtle's shell. He was petrified to be going so fast. He was terrified of falling into the water. He was horrified of not being able to stop.

Bushy dug his claws deeper into the turtle's shell. He was afraid to look. He saw the river bank fly by. Mr. Yurtle was tossed one way, then the other as the current pulled them. "WHEN WILL THIS END?" yelled Bushy. He did not get an answer; he did not feel well at all. This was not going well at all.

Finally they made it through the rapids. The river calmed as the water deepened. Bushy looked around, his little heart beating hard. "Mr. Yurtle? Mr. Yurtle? Are you okay?" Bushy had never seen Mr. Yurtle look so small! Bushy wanted Mr. Yurtle to stop drifting. "Can you bring me to the edge? I want to get off," cried a nervous Bushy.

"MR. YURTLE? CAN YOU HEAR ME?" yelled Bushy.

After drifting quietly a while longer Mr. Yurtle poked his head out of his shell, and then one leg and then the other leg, one after the other. "Wow! What an exciting ride!" he exclaimed. Looking around, he saw that they had drifted past the houses — they were quite a long way further. "It will take me quite a while to crawl back on the land!"

"Can you bring me to the edge? I want to get off," repeated Bushy. "I want to go back." Mr. Yurtle agreed and began paddling to the river bank.

Bushy, who was still absolutely terrified of falling into the water, waited until Mr. Yurtle had climbed ashore. "How are you going back?" he asked Mr. Yurtle.

"Well, actually I think I will bask in the sun to warm up a bit before I head back," answered the turtle. Already he had found a nice log to rest on.

Bushy looked around and did not know where he was! He sniffed the air but could not recognize any smells. Even the river edge seemed different from the river edge at home.

"Mr. Yurtle, which way do I go?" he asked in a pitiful voice. But old Mr. Yurtle was already fast asleep.

Bushy looked at the river. He looked up the river and he looked down the river. Then he thought he recognized the top of a house. He was not quite sure, because he had never explored that far from home. *But being not quite sure was better than not knowing for sure*, he thought. So Bushy began to run towards the house. Bushy decided to stay on the edge of the river so as not to lose his way. And as he ran, he grew tired, he grew hungry, he grew thirsty.

"Oh my, where am I? How far do I need to go?" Bushy was afraid that he was very lost, and he felt very lonely. He thought of Chuck and Dash who by now were laughing and racing together through the woods, on the branches high in the trees. He thought they probably had already finished the race. They were both so fast and nimble. And he thought about how they both had probably found a perfect tree for their nest. They would both make a nice warm cozy nest to store their nuts and berries for winter.

And as he continued to run, he grew more and more tired, and more and more hungry. He thought of stopping to find some nuts but he didn't know how to sniff them out. And as he ran, Bushy thought of the times that he had disobeyed and avoided his mother.

He thought of how he had cheated Chuck and Dash by taking their nuts.

Suddenly he felt ashamed for all these things. He was ashamed to have played and teased his brother and sister while they were working so hard to learn all that their mother was teaching them. He was ashamed that he had not practiced with them. He did not know how to run on branches and jump from tree to tree. He did not know how to walk on wires. He did not know how to find nuts buried in the ground or to build a nest up in a tree.

As he thought about his behavior, he slowed down. He knew that he would have to change his ways. He shivered when he thought of the ride on the river, and he knew that he would not choose the easy way out anymore. And he knew what he had to do.

Then he noticed that the forest floor had more familiar smells. Listening carefully, his little ears picked up the sounds of crunching nuts. He followed the noise until he finally arrived at the big pine tree.

Mother Scurry was very happy to see that Bushy had returned safely, though late. Chuck and Dash paid no attention to him as they loudly compared their adventures. "Bushy, come and join us," said

his mother. "You must be very hungry." Noticing his shivers, she skipped over to him and patted his head with her paws.

Bushy was very hungry! But first he wanted to say something to the family. "Mom, can I say something first?" At her nod, he spoke to everyone, "I want to say how sorry I am for the way I have acted all summer. I never helped you. I lied about the nuts I found. I never worked with you when you practiced walking high on branches or on the wires. And I cheated on the race today when I asked Mr. Yurtle for a ride down the river to the houses."

He looked sadly at everyone. They all looked so healthy and able to do anything. "I am sorry that I let you down. I promise not to cheat or lie anymore. And I promise to practice so that I can do what you are all able to do so well."

"Come and eat now Bushy," invited his mother. "Tomorrow, after a good sleep, we will all practice together. We will build our nests. And we will forage for food. We will be ready for winter."

Mother Scurry could rest fully now. She knew that Bushy had finally grown up!

# The Smallest Paddle

Today was the first day of Fall. There was a soft warm breeze and the sun was shining in the bright blue sky when Grandma, Grandpa and their two small grandsons Sacha and Victor prepared to go for a short canoe trip on the lake. Grandma had packed snacks, water and lunch. Grandpa pushed the canoe into the water and loaded up a blanket, the food hamper, the first aid kit and the oars. Victor carried his precious little paddle that Grandpa had given him — and that Grandma had once given Grandpa. And Sacha carried a small camera. He was going to take pictures along the trip. Both boys were very excited. This was their very first canoe trip!

"Well, we are ready to go," said Grandpa. "Let's get your life jackets on. And in you go," as he settled Sacha and Victor on cushions in the middle of the canoe.

"I'll sit in the front," said Grandma as she climbed into the wobbly canoe. And Grandpa pushed them away, quickly climbed in

and sat on the back seat. The water was calm, and they could hear the geese honking at the other end of the lake.

"Listen Sacha! Do you hear the geese Victor? Honk-honk-honk. Honk-honk-honk. What are they talking about?"

Sacha and Victor listened and looked at the geese in the distance. There were so many of them. "Honk-honk-honk. Honk-honk-honk." They echoed Grandma and laughed at the silly sounds.

Grandma wondered aloud: "Do you think the young geese are asking the older geese where they are going — honk-honk-honk? And how long will it take to get to the South — honk-honk-honk? And will we stop to eat — honk-honk-honk? And will we sleep — honk-honk-honk? What do you think?"

Sacha and Victor were enthralled. Sacha was taking pictures while Victor watched Grandma and turned to look at Grandpa as they skimmed over the water towards the geese. "Grandpa, you are going faster than Grandma," he said.

"By paddling deeper and stronger, you and I will get their faster," laughed Grandpa. But suddenly Grandpa turned his oar flat against the water and slowed the canoe. There was a dragonfly floating on the water, and it looked like it needed help. "Look Sacha, see the dragonfly next to the canoe? We need to help it. Slow down there Grandma!"

Sacha looked to where Grandpa was pointing. He saw a bug flapping and going in circles on the water. "Is that a dragon, Grandpa? How can we help it?" he asked.

And as they slowed down, Grandpa picked up the dragonfly with his oar. He carefully pulled the oar into the canoe and showed the boys. "Give me your paddle Victor. Be careful not to drop it now," he said as he carefully placed the dragonfly on the small paddle. "You must sit very quiet. The dragonfly is very tired and must rest. The sun will dry its wings, and when it is ready, it will walk around on your paddle and fly away."

Victor listened, looking wide-eyed with wonder at the dragonfly. "It's so pretty."

"What color is it Sacha? Can you tell me what it looks like?" asked Grandma.

Sacha was thinking of how to describe the dragonfly. "It has long shiny grey wings, with blue on the wings. It has big eyes with a long thin stomach." Sacha really did try well to describe it! He took a picture of Victor and the dragonfly. Then he whispered to the dragonfly and asked if it was feeling better. "How long will it take before it can walk?" he asked Grandpa.

"Well, that depends," Grandpa said. Grandpa always said "that depends" when he did not know. "Wait a few minutes more. The wings need to be very dry before it walks around." The canoe moved easily over the water once more, and the breeze helped the wings of the dragonfly dry faster.

"It's moving! It's moving!" exclaimed Victor. He watched as the dragonfly crawled slowly along his paddle. He watched as it moved its wings, and tried flapping fast. And he watched with wonder as it flew off. The dragonfly hovered beside the boys. It looked at them for a few seconds before it darted off. "He's going Grandpa! Grandma look, he's over there!"

"You've saved a dragonfly, good for you Victor!" smiled Grandma. "Look, we have nearly reached the geese. We need to be

very quiet and see if we can get closer to them." And as they approached Sacha quickly took more pictures.

Sacha and Victor were surprised to see so many of them. They honked loudly as they swam closer to one another, and away from the canoe. Some of the geese flexed their wings to scare off the canoe, and some geese ran on the water away from the canoe! "Did you see the geese running Grandma? And some geese are snapping at each other!" The geese were honking even more loudly as they glided past.

"How far are we going Grandpa? Will it take very long? I need to go to the bathroom?" asked Victor.

"Look up front, past Grandma," pointed Grandpa, "do you see the sandy beach? That's where we will stop. Just a few minutes more. Can you wait that long?" Victor nodded 'yes', as he looked at the beach becoming bigger.

Soon Grandpa glided the canoe into the sand and they all got out, and then stretched their legs. Victor and Grandma walked to

the trees to take care of business! "Look Grandma!" as he pointed to a big rock in the shade that was full of daddy-long-leg spiders. He was amazed as they climbed and crawled around each other. They all seemed to want to play together. Grandpa and Sacha came over to watch the spiders too!

"Do you think they would climb on my paddle?" asked Victor.

"Let's try it and see." And Grandpa showed him how to lean the paddle on the rock. Sacha took many pictures of the spiders, and of Victor placing his paddle.

"Let's have lunch and we can see after if they climbed on your paddle," said Grandma. And so they spread out the blanket, took out the picnic lunch and ate. They watched as two squirrels chased each other close by. "I think they want our bread," said Grandma. "Can you throw a few pieces to them, Sacha?"

He slowly took a few steps towards them, and threw them some very tiny pieces which he pulled from his sandwich. He laughed when they nibbled them up in one bite! "Can I have some more Grandma? The squirrels are hungry!"

Later Grandma put away the food basket, as Grandpa, Sacha and Victor explored the area for bugs. They found beetles on the leaves, worms under the leaves and caterpillars eating the leaves. They looked at the water's edge and saw frogs quietly sitting on lily-pads. The frogs jumped into the water as Sacha came closer to take a picture. Grandpa pointed to some strange inch-long muddy tubes in the shallow water and inside each one was a bug — underwater! Then they all went to see Victor's paddle.

Victor was beaming. The spiders were moving up and down his paddle! They watched for a while and then collected a few pinecones for Grandma to take back home. Grandpa showed Victor how to carefully shake off the spiders from his paddle. "We don't want to hurt their long legs." Victor very carefully blew the spiders off his paddle. Then they all got ready to climb back into the canoe.

Grandpa packed the blanket and picnic basket behind Victor. As they pushed off, he held his little paddle close and leaned back. He saw a flock of birds flying low over the water. And in the rocking canoe, he watched them for as long as he could see them. It wasn't long before he was napping. The fresh air and the rocking canoe also made Grandma sleepy and soon she too was resting. It was so peaceful with the beautiful fall colors.

Sacha kept busy looking through his camera lens and took many pictures of the trees. The maple, birch and oak leaves had turned red, orange, yellow and brown. But the pine and cedar trees had kept their deep shades of green. They kept drifting until they came to a beach, and Grandpa paddled them up to the shore. "There might be turtles here."

"Where are we?" asked a sleepy Victor. He looked around and saw long grasses and logs along the rocky beach.

"We are going to have a small snack here and find some turtles," said Grandpa.

"I also want to collect some nice round rocks," said Grandma.

"Turtles!" Sacha and Victor had only ever seen turtles in their story books. Their eyes grew wide as they walked along very quietly so as not to scare them. Then they looked to where Grandpa was pointing. "They are so funny looking!" Sacha said. He watched as two turtles were sunning themselves on a log. Their necks were stretched out and they were very still. They looked like they were waiting for something!

Grandpa explained that turtles were surrounded by their own boney shell and carried their homes on their backs. Turtles just had to poke their heads, legs and arms into their shell, and they were safe. Sacha watched as one turtle slipped into the water and swam a bit further. And when Grandma brought the snacks, Victor left some bits on the beach for the turtles. Then the boys and Grandpa had fun crawling around the beach back to the canoe — mimicking the crawling turtles!

Soon it was time to go back. The sun was lower in the sky, and the air was cooling. "The air has changed," said Grandma who always felt such changes. Sacha helped Grandma find nice rocks to bring back before climbing into the canoe.

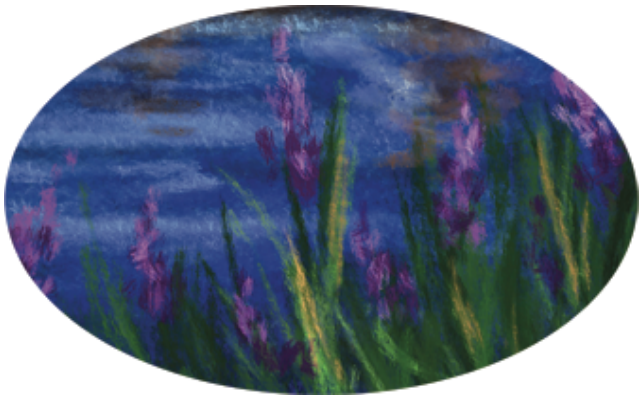
Victor was again sitting in the middle with his small paddle when he saw a moth struggling in the water. "Grandpa! We need to save a bug! Over there," he pointed. And so, Grandpa removed the moth slowly from the water with his oar, and carefully placed it on Victor's paddle. Sacha and Victor watched as it lay and dried out its wings, just like the dragonfly had. When they reached the launch area, Sacha, Victor and Grandpa very carefully took the moth and placed it on a leaf near the woods.

"It will be happy here, right Grandpa?" Victor asked.

"Yes, I think it will be very happy here," agreed Grandpa. And Sacha took more pictures of the moth they had saved.

The boys climbed into the car to ride home. On their way they waved good-bye to the lake, the trees, the geese, the turtles, birds and bugs. "Bye-bye, bye-bye."

"We'll come back again soon," promised Grandma as she too said good-bye to the lake, the trees, the geese, the turtles, birds and bugs.



# A Walk in the Wind

Grandma had just finished her toast and coffee when the phone rang. "Hi Grandma, is it still okay if Paul and I go spend the day with you and Grandpa?" asked Louise.

"Of course! We are just finishing breakfast. Come over whenever you like. And don't forget to dress warmly, and bring your scarf, hat and gloves. There is a fierce wind outside — good for a hike. Maybe in the big meadow out front," said Grandma. "You can sleep over too if you like. We have a good movie."

"I'll tell Paul and we'll get ready. Mom wants to say hello." Grandma had already arranged the visit with her daughter. She would drop the children off shortly and they could stay for a sleepover as well.

Grandma packed a lunch, found knapsacks for Paul and Louise, and filled the water bottles. She poked her nose outside. *Perfect!* The air was crisp and cool, and she could see the wind blowing through the pine trees. "Dress warmly," she called to Grandpa.

When the children arrived, they put their overnight bags in their bedrooms before preparing for their hike. Grandma gave each

of them a knapsack with their lunch and a water bottle. Grandpa also carried a small first-aid kit in his pack. And then all four set off.

They walked to the end of the road, and then following Grandpa, turned down the path that led to the meadow.

"The stream is quite high," Grandpa said as he pointed to the water that crossed the path.

"How will we get across?" asked Louise.

"Paul and I will find the boards that I put here last week. We'll put them across at that narrow point there, and make a bridge for us to cross." Grandpa and Paul carefully laid down the wood and then tested the bridge to make sure it would not tip or break. Louise slowly crossed to the other side and turned to encourage Grandma to come too.

"You can do it Grandma. It's not very deep, but don't look down," said Louise.

Grandma, who did not like crossing wobbly wooden bridges, asked Grandpa to hold her hand. Soon all four were over the bridge and walking towards the big meadow.

They walked under the tall pine trees. Their long branches were swaying in the strong wind. Grandma stopped and closed her eyes. "Listen to the wind. You can hear it howling as it wanders through the forest. Sometimes it moves so fast that it sounds like the branches are whistling! Can you hear it?" she asked Paul and Louise. The children closed their eyes too, and listened carefully.

"Yes!" Paul said as he whistled with the wind.

"I can hear a roar," said Louise.

"Keep your eyes closed now, and feel the wind on your face. And smell the fresh pine needles. It is such a refreshing smell! And do you feel the wind pushing you? It is blowing very hard today."

"It does smell nice," said Louise.

"And I have to hold myself strong against the wind so as not to be pushed," said a surprised Paul.

"I just love walking in the wind!" exclaimed Grandma.

"Why?" asked the children in unison. Sometimes Grandma was funny. She certainly was different!

"Let's catch up to Grandpa, he is already at the cow fence. I've always loved the wind. Ever since I was a little girl, the wind has always been my best friend."

"How can the wind be your friend?" asked Louise. Yes, she decided, Grandma was funny. *How can the wind be a friend?* she thought. She smiled at Paul who seemed to read her thoughts.

"When I was a little girl I often could not talk to anyone about what bothered me. I did not think that they would understand or maybe I was too shy. So on very windy days, I could hear the wind calling me as it rushed through the trees. I would dress warmly and go for a walk in the wind. The wind would come from far away. It travelled across land, over the hills and into the valleys, over rivers and lakes, through the streets of the cities to where I was walking. I liked to think that it brought me energy and strength as I thought about things." She stopped and opened her arms to embrace the wind. She was smiling. "Do you feel the energy?"

The children stopped with her and opened their arms. The wind was pushing against them. It felt like a big hug! They looked

across the meadow to the hills beyond. They imagined the wind coming from far, far away. "It does feel good," said Paul. And Louise nodded her head 'yes'.

Grandma continued. "So when something bothered me at school, or at home, or if my best friend and I had argued — a walk in the wind would help me figure things out."

"But how?" asked Louise. She thought this was a trick. *Could the wind really talk to Grandma?*

"It's like this. When I walk in the wind, I think of what bothers me — then I push it away from my mind, and the wind blows it away for me. And then I let the wind bring in new ideas on how to solve the problem, or how I could change things to make them better. And once what bothers me is taken care of, the wind gives me the energy to be strong and happy again."

Louise and Paul thought about this. And they listened as Grandma continued her story. "Sometimes the wind helps me to think about what I need to say, especially when it is something that is difficult for me to speak about. Other times the wind helps me to

plan future events. And the wind is especially good at helping me imagine stories!"

They had finally caught up to Grandpa. He shushed them and pointed to some deer in the woods ahead. They all watched as the deer nibbled on the low cedar branches. Grandpa took pictures of them with his cell phone, and then took a picture of Grandma with the children. "There are some wild turkeys in the meadow too. I saw them earlier. We'll go quietly and we might be able to track them. They are just ahead of us," he said.

"The grasses are so long," said Paul. "Do you think we'll see them?"

"We might if we are quiet. They are bigger and fatter at this time of year." They continued on the path. Soon they came to an opening in the woods, and sure enough, there was a large family of wild turkeys. They had their noses to the ground and were pecking at whatever they could eat. Grandpa took pictures of the turkeys too!

"This is a perfect spot for us to eat our lunch," suggested Grandma. From the opening they could see the hills to their right, and the pine forest to their left. The children opened their

knapsacks and ate their sandwich with gusto! As they were eating Louise pointed to a hawk that was hovering above. "Look!"

Then Paul spotted another hawk that was flying high above in a huge circle over the forest. "There's another one," as he pointed over the trees.

"They are looking for small animals — mice, squirrels or moles — to eat," explained Grandpa. "There may sometimes be three or four hawks flying in circles looking for food."

After their lunch Grandma thought that it would be nice to collect pinecones, small red twigs, some milkweed seeds and pods, and other dried plants. On another visit, another time, she would show them how to make decorations for the Christmas tree with what they had collected. Louise and Paul also found some nice red maple leaves and some very big brown oak leaves which the wind had blown to the ground.

They continued to hike through the trees that surrounded the meadow. When they arrived at the swampy area, Grandpa showed them how the water made the mossy earth feel like big sponges. The water squished out of the moss when they walked on it! He also

showed them how clear and clean the water looked as it ran through the mosses. They followed the mossy mounds further to the pond, and there they were surprised by how muddy the stagnant water appeared.

"Look!" Louise pointed to a small turtle that was sitting on a log at the edge of the pond.

"Can we try and catch it?" asked Paul.

Grandma did not think that was such a good idea. "The turtle is better here; this is his home. Let's take a picture of it instead. And next time we can return here to see how much it has grown."

Grandma pointed to a Blue Heron crane that was slowly walking on the other side of the pond looking for small fish or a frog to eat. The children were surprised to see such a tall bird! "Wow!" they mouthed together.

"The legs are like long sticks," said Louise.

"It will fly back to its nest on the river soon," said Grandpa.

The wind was stopping, and as the sun began to drop in the sky the trees cast long shadows in the meadow. They all agreed that it

was a good time to return home. Grandpa led them back following another path that led to the same little wooden bridge he and Paul had built to cross the stream. This time Paul held Grandma's hand to cross the water.

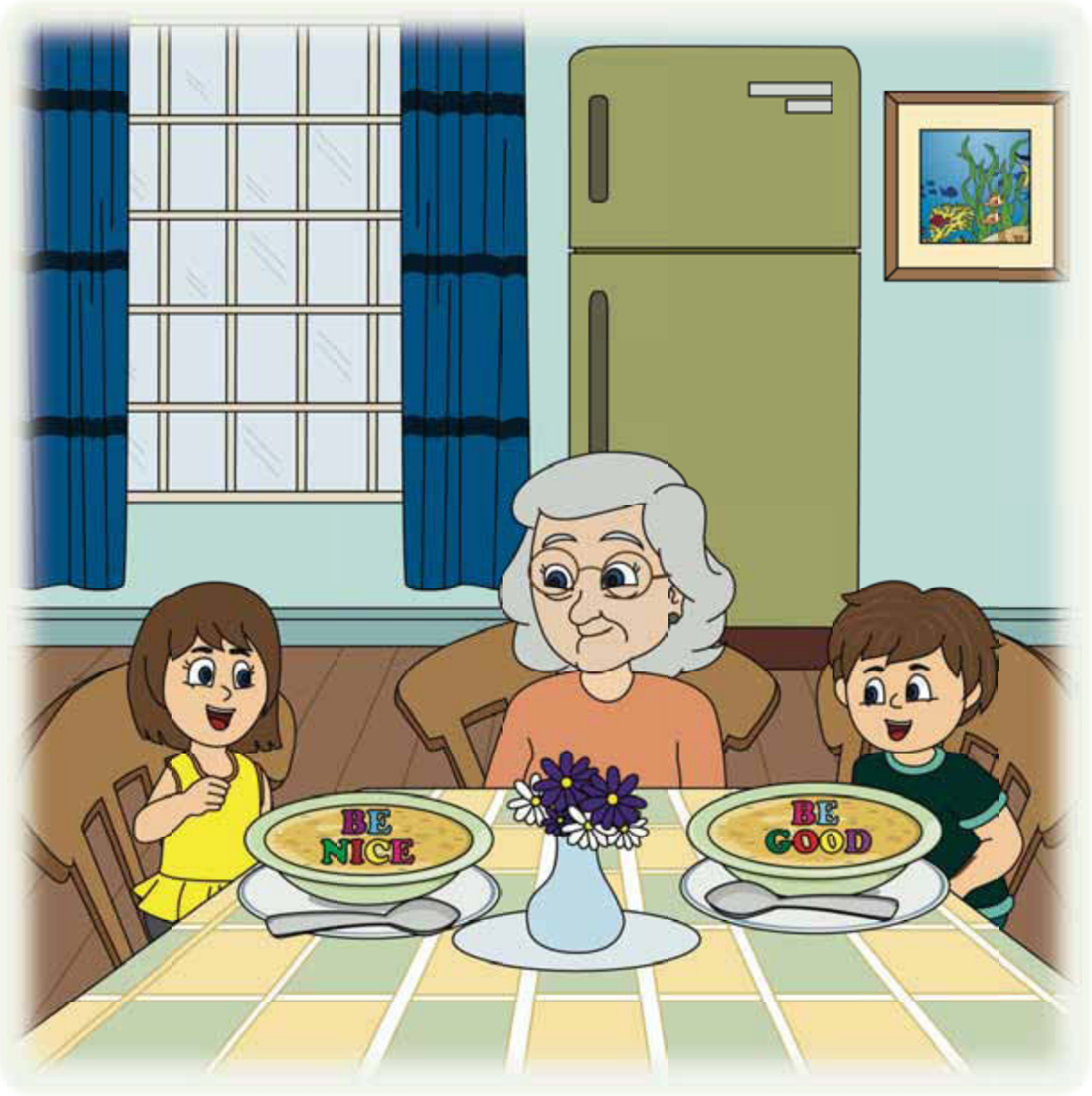
"Don't worry Grandma, if you fall, we both fall!" Grandma chuckled at his reasoning.

Once over the bridge Grandma asked them what they thought about their walk in the wind. "I'm going to walk in the wind next time I hear it at home," said Louise.

Paul agreed that he would like to do that as well. He said that he had lots of things to think about — good for school projects!

"You might need to work at it first, but after a few windy outings you will find that thinking and walking in the wind comes naturally," said Grandma. "Right now, I feel really good after that nice hike and all that wind!"

Then they all went home to enjoy a cup of hot chocolate — with a marshmallow on top. Just the way Grandma liked it!


BE
NICE
BE
GOOD

# Grandma's Alphabet Soup

Laurie and Tom were eight year-old twins who lived in town. On weekdays they walked to their school that was past the fire station, past the park and over the bridge. They liked to play and chatter with their friends as they all trooped down the sidewalk in the morning and back along the same route after school. Today was Friday and they were looking forward to their sleepover at Grandma and Grandpa's house in the country.

"Hi Grandma! Hi Grandpa!" they both called as they arrived.

"Hello, hello to you both!" replied Grandma. "Come on in out of the cold, we have all sorts of things that we need your help with this weekend. But first we'll have a nice warm supper." Laurie was quick to help set the table, while Tom was looking at the project that Grandpa was working on.

"What are you doing Grandpa?"

"You will soon find out… I need your help to put these boards together," replied Grandpa. "We'll start after the dishes are done."

Soon the table was set and Grandma served her warm alphabet soup with scones. The children loved this soup. It often had a message in the soup! Tom's letters spelled 'S-T-A-R-S'.

"What do yours say?" he asked Laurie.

Laurie laughed, "P-O-P-C-O-R-N". They both looked at Grandma and asked, "what does 'popcorn' mean?"

Grandma laughed and thought that maybe 'popcorn' would be good with a movie night! Grandpa just smiled and said "wait and see" with regards to Tom's word. Tom and Laurie wondered if Grandma and Grandpa put these words in the soup. And they continued to talk about the past week at school.

Tom and Laurie remembered what happened to a new girl who had just arrived in their class. Laurie looked down at her plate. She looked sad. "Grandma, this new girl arrived in our class. She is very shy and does not speak English very well. She doesn't know how to skip a rope, and seems afraid of us." Laurie spoke quietly as she continued. "My friends were not nice to her and were laughing at her at recess.

They even locked the bathroom door so that she could not use it." Then Laurie added that she too laughed at the new girl when she couldn't read aloud in class. She felt ashamed for being so mean.

Grandma looked at Tom and asked if he also had laughed at the new girl.

Tom lowered his head and said yes. "I laughed when she tripped over some books in the hallway." Grandma looked at both of them and thought for a minute.

"We'll finish our supper. I've made you a nice apple pie for dessert. And then I want to show you something." Grandma then told them about the movie that they would see later.

After the table was cleaned and all the dishes were done, Grandma went to her bedroom to get a small silver frame that was on her dresser. "Here, I want to read this to you. When I was a little girl, my classmates and I had been unkind to a little girl as well. Our teacher saw us do that and spoke to the whole class afterwards, telling us that it was important for everyone to be nice to each other. She also told us that even though we may not look the same, or have the same skin color, that we were all children who needed friends. She said that we should accept the differences between us, and learn from each other. She said that we all had a

special gift, and that we should share that gift with others." Grandma had a faraway look, as she remembered that day in class…

"Then the teacher asked the class to write out the following poem. She said that we should read it every day and to think about the words." Grandma continued, "I want to share these words with you now, and I'll make each of you a frame to bring home. This is what I read every day myself:"

Kindness
by Stephen Grellet

I expect to pass through this world but once;
Any good thing therefore that I can do,
Or any kindness that I can show
to any fellow-creature,
Let me do it now;
Let me not defer or neglect it,
For I shall not pass
This way again.



"What does it mean?" asked Tom.

"It means that every morning is a new day — a new day of adventure, of seeing friends, of doing different activities and learning new things. And in everything that you do on this day, you should do it with kindness for others. If you have a choice to make, choose to be kind, choose to be good, especially to those who need your help and friendship." Grandma looked at them to see if they understood. "I like to read this every morning when I wake up. It reminds me of what is important. And at the end of the day it is nice for me to think of all the people I was kind to."

Laurie asked if they could read it aloud together. And Tom wanted to read it 'once more' when they finished. "I will try really hard," said Laurie, thinking of the new girl. Tom also agreed that he would like others to be kind to him as well.

"That's wonderful, and you are right Tom; we all like others to be nice to us," said Grandma. "Now who is ready for a movie?"

The next day Tom helped Grandpa build a bookshelf for all his books. And Tom spent a long time sitting on the floor looking at Grandpa's books on stars and galaxies. Laurie and Grandma went outside and put all the flower pots in the garden shed ready for the winter.

At lunch the children wanted to have more of Grandma's alphabet soup. "Yes, I do think we have more," and she put a bowl in front of each of them. And this time Laurie's letters said 'B-E N-I-C-E'. And Tom's letters said 'B-E G-O-O-D'. They both laughed when they saw Grandma wink at them. She must have made those words in the soup!

As Tom and Laurie walked to school on Monday they told their friends about Grandma's poem. The others agreed that they would ask the new girl to play with them, and that they would all try to be kinder towards her. The twins talked with their teacher about their visit with Grandma, and said they would like to read the poem to the class.

When they had finished reading Grandma's poem, Miss Stewart said "That was so nice! How would you like to have a Theme Day based on 'kindness'? To start with, I will write the poem on the blackboard, and everyone will copy it neatly on a piece of paper, and decorate it with drawings. We will hang these around the classroom.

On Theme Day you will each talk about a book or story that you read that shows acts of kindness. Once the day is over you can all bring your poem home."

A few weeks later all the children in the class, including the 'new' girl who was not so 'new' anymore, were preparing to read their reports when the Principal walked in. "Hello class!" He smiled as he greeted them. "I have heard that this is a very special Theme Day, and I would like to hear your stories."

The children, a little bit nervous, but beaming still the same, went up front, one-by-one, to tell their stories. Afterwards Miss Stewart congratulated them all and asked them to form a 'talking circle'. "What is the most important thing that you have heard today? And with whom can you share these stories?" she asked.

Laurie said that she would tell her parents and her Grandma about this Theme Day, and added "I have learned so many ways today on how to be kind."

After a few words from the Principal, Miss Stewart thanked them all for their participation

# Blue Feather and the 'Sabe'

Derek's school was planning a Multicultural Day to celebrate all the different cultures that the children's families brought to the community. Miss Kelly asked the class what they would like to do for the celebration.

"Could we dress in traditional clothes? I have a nice pink sari that I could wear," said a beaming Alicia. Her parents were from India, and they were always wearing their loose *lungis* that her grandparents sent from home.

"Can I bring some sweets and cookies?" Lisbeth's mother made delicious Ukrainian desserts that everyone would love.

"My mother teaches dance, and she could show us a folk dance from the islands," said an excited Luana. Her parents worked for the Haitian embassy, and she would be at the school for a few years.

"These are all great ideas, I'll put activities on the blackboard and you can add your name to the activity that you would like to help organize." She wrote in big letters:

TRADITIONS - CLOTHES - FOOD - ACTIVITY

Derek, a young Aboriginal boy, put up his hand. "Miss Kelly, my Grandfather teaches at Pow-Wows. He talks about the seven sacred Grandfather Teachings to children there. Could I invite him to speak to us? His name is Little Beaver." Miss Kelly, who knew about the teachings, was very happy with Derek's suggestion.

"Derek I would be very happy for your Grandfather to come and speak with the class. Would you like me to invite him to give a lesson?" she asked. Derek said that he would first ask his Grandfather if he could and would let her know.

Over the next few weeks all the children prepared for the multicultural celebration. When the day finally arrived, all the classes gathered in the auditorium. Many children were wearing their traditional clothes, and were happy to tell their friends where they originally came from. The auditorium was brightly decorated — colored tablecloths covered the tables which held objects from around the world. There was also a nice mix of smells coming from the kitchen from the various sweet or spicy foods that were to be served at recess.

The Principal, Mr. Raymond, welcomed all the children and asked them to find a place to sit down. "Today is a very special day. Today is to celebrate our differences and our similarities." He looked over all the faces and smiled. "You know, you all are unique,

you have your own ways of being, your own hopes and dreams. And yet, you all will have similar challenges and experiences. Today is a day to celebrate all the special gifts that we have and share them with your fellow students. And one special gift we have for you today is a teaching from Grandfather Little Beaver from the Mohawk community. I ask that you give him all your attention." Mr. Raymond invited Grandfather to join him in the front.

Grandfather smiled at the children. He would speak and drum to keep their attention. "Hello, I am Grandfather Little Beaver and I am from the Mohawk clan. My father was named Big Beaver from the Wolf clan," and he raised his hand above his head. "He was very tall. My mother was Moonbeam of the Turtle clan."

And he began to softly drum — tum - tum - tum. "I always begin by thanking the Creator for sharing this beautiful land with us," — tum - tum - tum, he drummed. "I want to say thank you for the fish that swim in the water, the animals that walk on the land, and our feathered friends that fly in the sky. I want to thank them for the food, clothing and shelter that they provide for us," — tum - tum - tum. "I want to say thank you for the plants, trees, rivers and lakes, earth and mountains that provide us with nourishment and protection," — tum, tum - tum. "Thank you for the sun, the moon, and the stars."

Then he drummed a song to honor all the directions of the compass — the North, the South, the West, the East, the sky above and the earth below. Tum - tum - tum, tum - tum - tum, hummed the drum.

Grandfather Little Beaver placed the drum carefully on a blanket and picked up a long Eagle feather. "I hold this Eagle feather to honor the truth and the story which I am about to tell you." And looking at the children, he began.

"This story is about little Blue Feather, and how she learned to be a good child to her parents, and a good sister to her brothers and sisters.

One day Blue Feather was washing a deer hide in the river. The sound of a snapping twig made her look up to the other side of the water. There she saw a tall person, but she couldn't quite recognize him. She seemed to look through him and into the forest behind! It was Sabe — the big man everyone talked about! Her Grandfather had told her about Sabe. He represented *Honesty,* and he encouraged those who saw him to be good, to be true to themselves, and to speak the truth.

Blue Feather, as if in a dream, tip-toed across the stones to the other side of the river and began to follow him because Grandfather had said that he was kind. Above she saw the Eagle flying over her. She knew that the Eagle, who represented *Love*, would protect her and guide her as she walked through the forest. Inside her belly she felt the power of the Bear who gave her the *Courage* to follow Sabe deeper into the woods. The Courage in her belly made her feel confidant and brave; she did not feel fear as she walked. Blue Feather knew that Sabe was guiding her for a reason, and that Bear in her belly would give her strength.

Sabe led Blue Feather to a pond. Across the pond was the hard-working Beaver, who is *Wisdom*. He was choosing long leafy branches and dragging them through the pond to build up the lodge in preparation for winter. She watched as he worked very hard to protect his kits and their mother, tapping mud to fill the spaces between the branches.

Near the pond Blue Feather met Turtle, who represents *Truth*. The Turtle was sitting on a log, pulling at a twig. When the Turtle

turned and looked into her eyes, she told her to learn and to know, and to be one with the Seven Teachings that Sabe was teaching her during their walk.

Sabe began to lead her back towards the river. On the path she saw a big grey Wolf, the symbol for *Humility*. The Wolf, protector of the pack, was leading the family to a new place where there was plenty of food and a safe den. After looking at Blue Feather for a few minutes, he melted quietly into the forest. Blue Feather continued towards the river. She felt Eagle, the symbol of *Love*, watching her from above, and looking up, she thanked him for his loving guidance. Then she turned the corner and stopped in her tracks!

Sabe seemed to be stroking a Buffalo! Buffalo is the symbol of *Respect*. In more traditional times, the buffalo lived side-by-side with the Aboriginal people. They provided food, their hides provided clothing and shelter, and were honored in Aboriginal art. Blue Feather knew that Sabe was teaching her to honor earth's providers and fellow beings. She thanked Buffalo for all he had given the People as she looked deep into his eyes.

Then, hearing the flow of the river again and seeing her aunts washing hides at the river, she turned to say thank you to Sabe. But he had already disappeared into the woods. Blue Feather looked around her and honored the trees. She thanked the forest animals for their friendship. She thanked the earth for letting her moccasins walk on trusted ground."

The story was over. Grandfather Little Beaver put his feather carefully on the blanket and turned back to the children. He continued: "Little Blue Feather grew to be a strong, kind and honest woman. She became my wife and we raised many children together."

"I would now like to ask Derek, my grandson, to come up here. I also need three volunteers to come up and play the drums with us."

Derek went up front and gave his Grandfather a big hug. "Thank you Grandpa," he whispered. "I love that story so much!" Grandpa hugged him back, and smiling, turned to the other children.

He gave each one a small drum and drumming stick. "Now we will drum a song to honor this gathering," he announced. He asked the children to quietly beat their drum with him. Tum - tum, tum -

tum - tum, and then more loudly, tum - tum, tum - tum - tum. They all walked in a circle and played their drums.

"Thank you everyone for listening to my story. Thank you for inviting me." And Grandfather waved good-bye as he turned and left.

Mr. Raymond thanked Grandfather Little Beaver and reminded the children to remember what the animals represented: "This story teaches us to be true to ourselves, loving, respecting and honoring our family and friends, and choosing to be good, helpful and kind to others."

And he continued: "This Multicultural celebration is also about honoring and learning about people of other cultures. I now invite you all to go and enjoy the food that many of you have shared with us. Go and see the many souvenirs that have been brought in, and learn their stories."

That night Derek and many of his friends thought of everything that they had heard and seen that day. They were thankful to have friends from so many far-away places.

The End