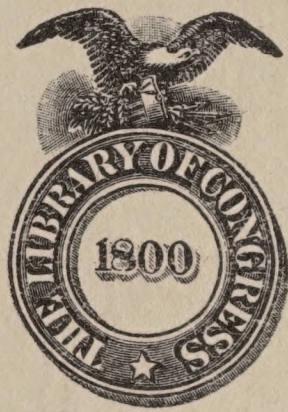


BUMPER
THE WHITE RABBIT
AND HIS FRIENDS





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Twilight Animal Series

BUMPER
THE WHITE RABBIT
AND HIS FRIENDS

By

GEORGE ETHELBERT WALSH

Author of "Bumper the White Rabbit," "Bumper the White Rabbit in the Woods," "Bumper the White Rabbit and His Foes," "Bumper the White Rabbit and His Friends," "Bobby Gray Squirrel," "Bobby Gray Squirrel's Adventures," Etc.

Colored Illustrations by
EDWIN JOHN PRITTIE



THE JOHN C. WINSTON COMPANY
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TWILIGHT ANIMAL SERIES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

FROM 4 TO 10 YEARS OF AGE

By
GEORGE ETHELBERT WALSH

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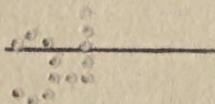
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INTRODUCTION TO THE TWILIGHT ANIMAL STORIES

BY THE AUTHOR

All little boys and girls who love animals should become acquainted with Bumper the white rabbit, with Bobby Gray Squirrel, with Buster the bear, and with White Tail the deer, for they are all a jolly lot, brave and fearless in danger, and so lovable that you won't lay down any one of the books without saying wistfully, "I almost wish I had them really and truly as friends and not just story-book acquaintances." That, of course, is a splendid wish; but none of us could afford to have a big menagerie of wild animals, and that's just what you would have to do if you went outside of the books. Bumper had many friends, such as Mr. Blind Rabbit, Fuzzy Wuzz and Goggle Eyes, his country cousins; and Bobby Gray Squirrel had his near cousins, Stripe the chipmunk and Webb the flying squirrel; while Buster and White Tail were favored with an endless number of friends and relatives. If we turned them all loose from the books, and put them in a ten-acre lot—but

INTRODUCTION

no, ten acres wouldn't be big enough to accommodate them, perhaps not a hundred acres.

So we will leave them just where they are—in the books—and read about them, and let our imaginations take us to them where we can see them playing, skipping, singing, and sometimes fighting, and if we read very carefully, and *think* as we go along, we may come to know them even better than if we went out hunting for them.

Another thing we should remember. By leaving them in the books, hundreds and thousands of other boys and girls can enjoy them, too, sharing with us the pleasures of the imagination, which after all is one of the greatest things in the world. In gathering them together in a real menagerie, we would be selfish both to Bumper, Bobby, Buster, White Tail and their friends as well as to thousands of other little readers who could not share them with us. So these books of Twilight Animal Stories are dedicated to all little boys and girls who love wild animals. All others are forbidden to read them! They wouldn't understand them if they did.

So come out into the woods with me, and let us listen and watch, and I promise you it will be worth while.

BUMPER THE WHITE RABBIT AND HIS FRIENDS

STORY I

BUMPER AND SLEEPY THE OPOSSUM

Bumper, after working hard to trick his enemies so they would be more afraid of the rabbits in the woods, had decided the ways of peace were better than those of war. Not that he was going to permit Sneaky the Wolf or Loup the Lynx to pounce upon his people and eat them up without fighting, but instead of going around with a chip on his shoulder, expecting and looking for trouble, he intended to make friends of all the animals and birds, and be helpful to them.

It is wonderful how much good to others we can overlook if we go about with our eyes shut. There is plenty to do if we look for it. So Bumper found in a short time that he had missed a good deal in always looking for the worst in others instead of for the best.

Only a few days after his change of plans, which was told of in a former book, Bumper stumbled upon Sleepy the Opossum in a tree, with his eyes closed in slumber. At first he

was going to pass him without a word of greeting, for Sleepy had more than once angered him by his sharp tongue. Then he thought better of it.

"Hello, Sleepy!" he called good-naturedly.

"Hello yourself!" was the sullen retort. "What do you want to wake me up for! Go on about your business, and let me sleep!"

Bumper was a little nettled at this sharp retort, and was going to answer back in a huff; but he didn't. He remembered his new resolution.

"If I were you, Sleepy," he said instead, "I wouldn't sleep outdoors in plain sight like that. You know Loup the Lynx is hunting in these woods now."

Sleepy opened both eyes an instant, and then closed them again. "You can't scare me," he drawled. "I've heard how you've been stirring up trouble in the woods. Now don't come around here with any of your tales."

Bumper was more nettled than ever at this reply, but still he controlled himself. "You'd better listen to me, Sleepy," he said. "It's true that Loup the Lynx is hunting in these woods, and if he passed here he could see you easily. Why not find a good hiding place if you must sleep outdoors?"

"Because I prefer this warm place in the sun. Now go on and leave me alone."

And Bumper hopped along, feeling that his offer of kindness was not wanted. He hopped for some distance until suddenly he heard a noise in the tree overhead. He stopped and glanced up.

There was Loup the Lynx crouched in the tree, looking for some small animal he could pounce upon. Bumper was concealed from view by the bushes, and unless Loup saw him he was safe. It would be an easy matter to hide there until Loup passed on.

But as he crouched he thought of Sleepy a short distance away. If Loup hunted in his direction he would surely see him, and that would be the last of Sleepy. Now the desire to hide, and save his own skin, made him crouch still lower in the bushes.

"It's none of my affair," he said to himself. "I warned Sleepy, and he wouldn't listen to me. I don't need to do anything more."

Of course, Bumper was right in a way, and he couldn't be blamed for thinking of his own skin first; but all the time his conscience kept troubling him. What if Loup should spring upon Sleepy and kill him! How would he feel! He would never feel that he had done all of his duty.

"No," he said finally, "I can't hide here and let Sleepy be caught. I must warn him once more."

Having made this decision, he crept out of his hiding place, and keeping the trees and bushes between him and the Loup, he made his way slowly back to where Sleepy was sunning himself.

"Sleepy," he called softly when he got under the tree. "Sleepy, wake up!"

Sleepy the Opossum opened his eyes again, and seeing who it was calling him they snapped with anger.

"I wish you'd mind your business, Bumper!" he said in a loud, disagreeable voice. "If you wake me up again I'll come down and bite you. Now get out!"

"But, Sleepy, you must hide. Loup the Lynx is coming. I saw him only a short distance away, and he's coming in this direction."

"Then why don't you run and hide? Loup is as fond of rabbits as of opossums. If he was coming you'd be the first one to run and hide. No, you can't make me believe any such story."

"But on my word of honor, Sleepy, he's coming," protested Bumper.

"Let him come then! Now I'm—"

Sleepy didn't finish his sentence. There was a snap of a twig nearby, and Bumper whispered:

"Run! Run! He's here! If you wait another minute you're lost!"

Sleepy was suddenly wide awake. He was suspicious of that snapping twig. He started down the tree for his hole where he would be safe. Half way there he caught sight of a pair of yellow eyes watching him. Then with a scream Loup the Lynx sprang for him, covering the distance between the two trees in one mighty jump. He landed plump on the limb where Sleepy had been sleeping.

But Bumper's timely warning had been of use. Sleepy was on the next limb, and before Loup could spring again the Opossum slipped into his hole with a squeak of fear. Loup sprang at him with a snarl of rage and anger, for he had missed him by merely an inch.

During all this time, Bumper had looked around for his own safety. Loup had not spied him, and he kept well under the green leaves of the bushes. Then just as Loup made the final spring for Sleepy, the white rabbit slipped under a big log where he could not be seen.

He lay there panting and palpitating with

fear. Would Loup come sniffing around and discover him? Or would he finally leave the place to hunt elsewhere? It was a terrible moment of uncertainty.

But luck was with him. Loup, never suspecting the presence of a rabbit below, finally leaped to a higher branch of the tree, and looked around. This was his favorite method of spying out any helpless animal below. Then he jumped to the next tree, and so made his way to another part of the woods.

Bumper waited a long time before he crept from his hiding place to renew his trip. When he finally did so all was quiet in the woods. But just as he hopped away a voice from the hole in the tree called to him.

"You saved my life, Bumper," Sleepy said, peeking his head out. "I'm sorry I spoke so crossly to you. Won't you forgive me?"

"Certainly, Sleepy," replied Bumper. "And I'm mighty glad Loup wasn't a minute sooner. Good-bye!"

Hopping away this time, he felt much better than before. He had done a good service to Sleepy, and won his friendship for all time. Next he had a chance to help Brownie the Muskrat in a very peculiar way, which will be the subject of the following story.

STORY II

BROWNY THE MUSKRAT

One day Brownny the Muskrat had burrowed so deep into the ground back of the river that his tunnel had caved into the rabbit burrow of Rolly Polly, and if it had not been for the quick work of Rolly Polly some of his children would have been drowned. The water from the river poured in right after Brownny and the burrow was quickly flooded.

Now Rolly Polly had never forgiven Brownny for that accident, the more so because Brownny had laughed at the plight of the rabbits instead of apologizing. Of course, it was an accident, but Brownny couldn't understand why rabbits objected to a little water. So far as he was concerned, he preferred to swim around in underground tunnels filled with water than crawling through dry ones.

So there had always been ill feeling between the rabbits and Brownny the Muskrat. It was one of those little quarrels between friends that lasts a long time, and often ends in trouble. It was such a senseless quarrel, too!

Brownny hadn't intended it, and he should have said so. Rolly Polly may have suspected it was an accident, but as Brownny didn't apologize he was angry, and wouldn't speak to any of the Muskrats again.

Bumper knew of this ancient quarrel, but as he had been busy with other things he hadn't paid much attention to it. He had never spoken to Brownny or any of his people. It wasn't the proper thing to do, you know.

One day Bumper was eating grass near the marshy end of the river, where the big cattails and rushes grow tall and slender, when he saw Brownny sitting on a bog watching him. He had just emerged from the water, and was all wet and dripping. Bumper continued eating grass without paying any attention to him.

"What are you doing here, Bumper?" Brownny called to him after a while. "This isn't your feeding ground. This marsh belongs to my family."

Bumper stopped nibbling and looked at Brownny in astonishment. "I didn't know that the marsh belonged to any one in particular," he replied.

"Well, it does, and now you know it," answered Brownny in an unfriendly voice. "Now get out of here!"

The tone of the voice as much as the com-

mand irritated Bumper, and a sharp reply sprang to his lips; but he checked it. He wasn't going to offend by angry words.

"All right, Brownny, if you say so, I'll go," he answered. Then, as an after thought, he added very politely: "And I'm sorry if I've trespassed upon your place. I won't do it again."

Brownny was so surprised by this apology that he sat there a moment in silence and stared at the White Rabbit. Never before had a rabbit apologized to him. Indeed, whenever words passed between them, they were harsh and unfriendly. Then, instead of accepting the apology in a friendly spirit, he laughed, and said:

"Oh! Ho! You're getting very polite all of a sudden, Bumper! Well, you can't make friends with me that way. I don't take any stock in soft words. Actions count with me more than polite words. No, I don't think you will do it again. If you do you know what will happen to you!"

Bumper withdrew before the angry retort that rose to his lips could escape. He was very indignant. Brownny was an ungrateful fellow. Well, he'd have nothing more to do with him or any of his tribe. Some day he might find a chance to get even with him. No, that would

never do! He had decided to make friends and not enemies. He would forget it, but—

Suddenly he hopped about a foot in the air, so quickly that his sentence was never finished. What was it in the marshy ground at his feet? He had touched something hard and cold that jangled when he tripped against it. For a moment he stood ready to fly, but on second thought he decided he would investigate, for the thing, whatever it was, hadn't moved. It still lay coiled up in the grass.

Bumper approached it carefully and smelt of it, and then laughed at his fright. It was a long chain, which for a moment had seemed to him like Killer the Snake coiled up in the grass. One end was fastened to a stake, and the other—

Horror of Horrors! It was attached to a trap, a steel spring trap, concealed right in the mouth of Brownny's hole. Some one had set the trap there to catch Brownny or one of his family. Forgetting all his anger, Bumper ran back, and shouted.

"Brownny! Brownny!" he cried. "I've found something!"

"Well, leave it where it is," replied Brownny, stroking his whiskers. "Findings aren't keepings around here."

"But it's a trap, Brownny," added Bumper. "I thought you'd want to know."

"Oh, traps don't bother me. The Hunters have been setting them for me as long as I can remember. But I'm too shrewd for them. They can't catch me."

"But this one is—"

"Oh, go on!" Brownny interrupted. "I ordered you off my place once. Must I do it again?"

Bumper made no reply. He had done all that he could in warning Brownny of the danger. Now the risk was his. He wouldn't put himself out again to help a Muskrat.

But once again that little conscience of his bothered him. After he had hopped away in the woods, he stopped to nibble at some young buds. "What if Brownny was caught in the steel trap?" he asked himself. "It would be terrible! He would either starve to death or be killed. Oh, I wish he'd listened to me!"

But he kept right on eating. It wasn't any of his concern. But curiously enough he ate toward the marsh, and not away from it, until once more he stood on the very edge. He seemed surprised at this, but after all he knew all the time he was eating toward it.

He looked around. Brownny was no longer in sight. Perhaps he had gone into the water

again. Bumper sat there and listened, with his neck stretched up to look over the tall grasses.

Then suddenly a muffled squeaking reached his ears. Where did it come from, and who was making it? He looked all around him in vain, and then he thought of the trap.

He hopped through the reeds and rushes until he came to it. Yes, there was the long chain, and the stake, but there was something at the other end, for the chain kept twitching and pulling. And out of Brownny's hole came a faint, muffled cry.

"Help! Help! Oh, won't somebody help me?"

"What's the matter, Brownny?" Bumper asked.

"My tail's caught in the trap, and I can't get out or in. I'm held fast in the hole. Oh, I'll die here if somebody doesn't help me before the Hunters come."

"Wait a minute!" shouted Bumper. "I think I can get you out."

Seizing the chain with his teeth, he threw himself back on his haunches, and began pulling with all his might. It was a mighty tug of war, for besides pulling the chain and steel trap out of the hole he had to pull Brownny, too. He pulled and pulled, slipping in the

mud, and getting all covered with it until he was no longer white. But the chain was coming, and so was the trap.

Suddenly it popped out, and right after it came Brownny. The teeth of the trap had caught the tip of his tail. With the last jerk this slipped out of the trap, and Brownny was free. He switched his long tail, and looked at it, but as he hadn't lost any of it he was greatly relieved. Then he turned to the rabbit.

"Bumper," he said, "that was a fine thing to do after the way I insulted you. If you can forgive me I'm always going to be your friend. You really saved my life, for the Hunters will soon be here."

"That's all right, Brownny," was the reply. "I want to be your friend."

In the next story you will hear of how Bumper made friends with Billy the Mink.

STORY III

BILLY THE MINK

Billy the Mink was a cousin to Gray Back the Weasel, but being much larger and more ferocious when attacked he was more to be feared. In addition to this he could swim like a duck and dive like a stone. In fact, he preferred the water to the dry land, and was very proud of his fur coat. Sometimes he would sit on the bank of the river in the sun just to admire the beautiful, glossy fur that nature had given him. With the sun sparkling on it when wet or dry, it certainly was something to admire and envy.

Billy the Mink, unlike his namesake Billy the Porcupine, had the bad habit of sometimes raiding rabbit burrows for food, and if there were young bunnies in the nest he made away with some of them in spite of the protests of their fond parents. This habit had caused him to be feared and hated by the rabbits, which was a very natural thing.

Roaming through the woods one day shortly after his adventure with Brownie the

Muskrat, Bumper discovered Billy the Mink sunning himself near his home. He really didn't want anything to do with Billy on account of his bad habits, and he was going to pass him without a word; but Billy caught sight of Bumper, and was suddenly envious of the beautiful fur of the white rabbit.

"I never saw a white rabbit before," he hailed. "Come nearer and let me see your beautiful fur."

Bumper wished to be polite and hopped closer.

"It really is white," Billy added, admiring the fur. "I suppose you're mighty proud of it."

"I'm very fond of it, and glad I have it," replied Bumper modestly. "Yes," honestly, "I'm proud of it. I don't think there's any harm in saying that. We have a right to be proud of the dress nature gave us—a little proud, I mean, but not too much as some people are."

Billy sneered, for he took this as a hint at his own well-known pride. "I suppose you mean by that I'm too proud," he said.

"I wasn't thinking of any one in particular," replied Bumper. "I wouldn't be so impolite as that."

"Oh, you wouldn't! You're very modest

and good today. Well, I know you referred to me."

Bumper wished to end the conversation, and started to hop away, but Billy suddenly jumped to his feet.

"You're so proud of your white coat that I'm going to soil it for you," he exclaimed.

Before Bumper realized what he intended to do, Billy began pelting him with mud, which he dug up with his hind legs. It splattered all over Bumper, and some of it went in his eyes so that he couldn't see which way to run. This was great fun to Billy, and he set up a shout of laughter.

"Now you're as spotted as Mr. Turtle and nearly as black. Ho! Ho! What a sight!"

Even this humiliation of Bumper didn't satisfy him. He wanted to roll him in the mud, and quick as a wink he leaped for him and caught him by the back. Then before Bumper could run away he had him down in the soft mud, which clung to him and turned his beautiful white fur a nasty brown.

"Now look at yourself!" laughed Billy. "You're about as homely looking as any rabbit in the woods."

Billy had returned to the place where he had been sunning himself, and flung himself down to rest and laugh. Bumper stood twenty

feet away spattered from head to foot with the mud. He was so upset by this unwarranted attack and humiliation that for a moment he could not speak. His one desire was to get even with Billy, and punish him.

Then as if in answer to his wish there came the opportunity. Gliding out of the bushes with stealthy tread, approaching Billy from behind was Sneaky the Wolf. In their struggle neither one had noticed his approach. He had crept almost upon them before Bumper happened to see him.

Sneaky was after Billy the Mink, for he was much the nearest, and was larger and fatter than Bumper. He offered such a tempting dinner that Sneaky was all atremble, crouching for the spring.

Bumper was perfectly safe for two reasons. One was that Sneaky was thinking only of Billy and ignoring Bumper, and another was the distance was too great for Sneaky to reach the white rabbit in a single bound. It seemed like a just punishment for his rough joke in spattering Bumper with the mud. In another minute Sneaky would have him in his jaws, and Billy would never play another joke or raid a rabbit's burrow.

"He who laughs last laughs the longest," Bumper said to himself, smiling.

Then there came a sudden change over him. He seemed to see Billy all torn and bloody, and heard his pitiful squeals as Sneaky killed him. Oh, that was too severe a punishment for playing a rough joke! No, he couldn't stand by in silence and see Billy killed even to satisfy a desire for revenge.

"Billy!" he called suddenly. "Billy, dive in the water! Don't look around! Sneaky's behind you! Dive! Dive!"

Billy had a horror of Sneaky the Wolf, and the very mention of his name sent the shivers through him. He didn't wait to ask questions, not even to turn and look. He took a flying dive for the water just as Sneaky leaped for him.

Billy plunged into the water not a second too soon. It had hardly closed over him before Sneaky was there, snapping and snarling. Then finding that his victim had escaped him, for Sneaky was no diver or swimmer, he turned angrily upon Bumper to punish him for giving the warning.

But Bumper had taken advantage of the interval to escape. When Sneaky sprang to where he had been standing there was no rabbit in sight. Doubly angry at finding both of his victims gone, Sneaky snarled and snapped his teeth, trotting up and down the edge of the

river, watching for the return of Billy or Bumper.

But they were wise enough to remain out of sight. Sneaky waited a long time, and then hid in the bushes and waited longer. But nothing happened. Then disgusted, and still very angry, he finally trotted away in the woods.

He hadn't been gone long before a head popped out of a hole, and Bumper, with the mud all dried and caked on his fur, crawled out. He watched and listened to make sure he was alone, and then hopped to the bank of the stream.

"Oh, dear," he said, "how will I ever get this mud off of me? It's all dried on!"

As if in response to his words, a nose appeared out of the water, and Billy the Mink swam ashore. Bumper eyed him suspiciously at first, and stood ready to run; but Billy spoke to relieve his mind.

"Don't go, Bumper!" he called. "Wait a minute!"

Swimming quickly ashore, Billy climbed up on the embankment. "That was a narrow squeak for me," he added, panting a little from his exertions. "If it hadn't been for you, Sneaky would surely have had me. Why did you warn me after I'd treated you so?"

"Because," stammered Bumper, "I didn't want to see you killed, Billy, even if you had spattered me with mud. But how am I ever going to get clean again? This mud is all caked on me."

"I'll clean you, Bumper. It's the least I can do to repay you. Now stand by the river while I splash water over you. That will soon wash the mud off."

It was a strange sight, Billy the Mink cleaning Bumper the White Rabbit by the edge of the river, each laughing and enjoying the work as if it was a new game, and if any one had seen them it would have caused no end of surprise. They were now as close friends as before they were enemies.

And if Bumper gets clean in time, and Billy doesn't spatter more mud on him, you will hear in the next story of how Bumper met Mr. Beaver.

STORY IV

MR. BEAVER HAS A SURPRISE

Mr. Beaver was the most exclusive animal of the North Woods. He not only lived apart from the other animals, but he constructed a house which no others could get into. Often it was merely an island in the middle of the stream, which he built up himself, and no animals except perhaps Billy the Mink or Brownny the Muskrat could even reach.

But Billy and Brownny had no desire to reach it or to investigate it. Mr. Beaver was as cross as he was fierce and dangerous. He had long teeth, which he kept as sharp as a razor by cutting down trees with them. Teeth that could cut down a big oak or chestnut were certainly to be feared.

Living alone had made Mr. Beaver a good deal of an old cross-patch. Most people who live that way generally do get cross and irritable in time. Sometimes if another animal ran across Mr. Beaver's house-top he would jump out and make a great time about it.

Mr. Beaver had constructed a dam across a

branch of the river so the water above it had backed up and formed a big pond. Thus he could have his own private fishing pond, for the fish upstream couldn't go down any further, and once caught in the pond Mr. Beaver killed a few whenever he was hungry.

Naturally he was very careful about this dam, and didn't want any one crossing it or interfering with it. If it was broken in one place the water would rush through it and let out many of his fish.

One day, after a long roundabout trip through the woods, Bumper was returning home when he reached the river. The bridge made of fallen trees that crossed to the other side was nearly a mile below him.

"Oh, dear," he groaned, "I'm dead tired, and now I must walk a mile down the river to get home."

He stood on the brink of the stream looking longingly at the other side. Then, glancing up, his eyes opened with surprise and pleasure. There was Mr. Beaver's dam a few yards above him, stretching from bank to bank.

"I suppose Mr. Beaver will object," he said to himself, "but if I walk very softly he won't hear me. Certainly not if he's asleep. Anyway, I'm going across that dam."

You couldn't blame him for wanting to save that long tramp down the river and back, and nobody but Mr. Beaver would have objected to his crossing the dam. Bumper hoped that by hopping along gently he wouldn't attract Mr. Beaver's attention. But it is very difficult to walk across the roof of a house and not attract the attention of those living in it.

No sooner had Bumper got fairly well on the top of the dam, than there was an angry growl inside. Then almost before he could think, up came Mr. Beaver, snorting and spouting water from his nose.

"What are you doing on my dam?" he demanded. "Don't you know that nobody is allowed to cross it?"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Beaver," replied Bumper. "I've been a long distance today, and when I reached the river I felt too tired to go down by the bridge. I thought if I stepped very softly it wouldn't disturb you."

"Well, it did! Now go back and take the bridge, and don't you ever dare cross this dam again."

"But the bridge is a mile down stream," replied Bumper, "and I'm half way across the dam. Surely you'll let me go on now."

"No, you can't go another step."

Mr. Beaver stood directly in his way so he

could not cross without passing close to him. Mr. Beaver's refusal angered Bumper for a moment, and instead of turning around to obey he decided he'd trick Mr. Beaver. He could easily leap over his head and run away from him.

"You're not very friendly to make me do that," Bumper replied, still watching for his chance.

"I don't intend to be friendly," was the prompt retort. "I only want to be let alone. Now go back!"

"Do you know, Mr. Beaver," Bumper replied, "I could get by you very easily and cross the dam? I could jump over your head in one hop and almost reach the other shore. But I won't do it! If you're so mean as to send me back, I don't want anything more to do with you. The sooner I get away the better I'll like it. But some day, Mr. Beaver, your selfishness will bring you trouble. You will wish for a friend then, and none will come. No, not one!"

"You can't frighten me!" exclaimed Mr. Beaver. "Nothing's going to happen to me!"

But even as he said it he felt a little nervous. Bumper's words had touched the quick. He wished now he hadn't been so selfish, but he was too old and crusty to acknowledge it. So

he stood on guard and watched the white rabbit hop back to the shore, and then he swung around to take a long dive into the water.

Perhaps Mr. Beaver had been on that log a hundred times, and nothing had ever happened; but one end had been balanced on another log for so long that it was rotted away. Suddenly it slipped down and carried Mr. Beaver with it, but not on top. He was wedged in between two logs so that he couldn't move down or up. Squeeze his body as flat as he could there was no way out.

For a moment he struggled frantically, and then finding he could make no headway he became frightened. What if he were caught there and couldn't escape! He would starve to death in a few days, and no one would know anything about it until too late.

What a horrible prospect! With a little squeal of fear at the thought of it, he looked up at the sky and across the pond he had made. There was no one to help him. Now he recalled Bumper's words. When he needed a friend there would be none to come to help him. Oh, how much he would give for a friend just now!

He struggled and struggled, but the two logs were embedded in the mud so he couldn't budge them. He was caught so he couldn't

get at them with his sharp teeth to gnaw his way out. He was certainly a prisoner for life.

Suddenly there was a tap, tap over his head, and he looked up to see the White Rabbit gazing down at him. "I heard you squeal, Mr. Beaver," Bumper said, "and I thought something had happened to you. Oh, I see you're caught between the two logs!"

"Yes, Bumper, and I can't get out. I'm afraid I'll starve here unless you can find Buster the Bear and get him to move the logs. And even then he may eat me up."

"I can do better than that," said Bumper. "If you keep still I can gnaw away enough from this log so you can squeeze your way out."

"Oh, if you could, Bumper!" exclaimed Mr. Beaver.

There were tears in Mr. Beaver's eyes, for he was terribly frightened, and when Bumper began gnawing at the log he watched him anxiously.

It was a long, hard job, but Bumper finally gnawed away enough of the wood for Mr. Beaver to get out. When he finally stood on the top of the log, he was so shaken by the experience that his teeth chattered.

"Bumper, you were right," he said.



“TELL YOUR PEOPLE THAT THEY CAN CROSS MY DAM”

“Everybody needs friends, and the time to make them is before you’re in danger. I won’t be so selfish again. Tell your people that they can cross my dam, and when they come ask them to speak a friendly word to me. I want to be their friend.”

All of which delighted Bumper, and when he finally left Mr. Beaver his heart was singing for gladness.

In the next story there will be an account of how the Birds brought terrible news to the rabbits.

STORY V

THE TERRIBLE NEWS THE BIRDS BROUGHT

After leaving Mr. Beaver, Bumper hurried home, and when he hopped into the burrow he was greeted by Fuzzy Wuzz who had been anxiously waiting for him. Bumper had been away from home so much lately that he was as glad to get back as Fuzzy Wuzz was to see him.

"We've all missed you so much," she said tenderly. "Old Blind Rabbit's been asking about you every hour of the day."

"Well, I have good news to tell you," was the reply. Then he related his experience with Mr. Beaver and with Billy the Mink, concluding with the remark: "They're both our friends now. In time of need they'd stand by us and help us. That's something worth bragging about."

"Indeed, it is, Bumper," replied Old Blind Rabbit. "It is better to make a dozen friends than one enemy."

Bumper was very much pleased with his work, and highly gratified at Old Blind Rab-

bit's commendation of it. Now that he had set forth to make friends of all the birds and animals of the woods who would listen to him, he felt that he must leave no stone unturned to accomplish his end.

So after resting a while in the burrow, he got up to go forth once more to see if further adventures that he could turn to good account awaited him. "It's astonishing," he remarked to Fuzzy Wuzz, "how much good you can do in the world if you're on the lookout for it. I'm just learning to keep my eyes open."

Fuzzy Wuzz nodded and smiled at him. They were standing at the entrance to the burrow when suddenly Hermit the Thrush, who had been singing a sweet melody in the bushes, stopped.

"Go, on, Hermit, and finish the song," Bumper called. "I like to hear such a jolly, blithe fellow sing."

But Hermit flitted his wings and cocked his head sideways. "For some reason I don't feel like singing, Bumper," he said. "I can't explain it, but I've simply lost my voice."

Bumper laughed good-naturedly. "That's funny," he replied. "A moment ago you were singing so sweetly that I could hardly think for listening to you."

"Yes, I know, but I can't any more. Do you ever have a feeling that something's going to happen? You can't tell just what it is or when it's coming, but you know it's in the air. Well, that's the way I felt all of a sudden, and my voice left me."

"You shouldn't give away to such feelings, Hermit," laughed Bumper. "You know there's nothing in such—"

Before he could finish, Black Cap the Chickadee flitted down from a high branch, and exclaimed breathlessly: "What's the matter! Something's going to happen! I feel it!"

"Yes," replied Hermit gravely, "I was just telling Bumper I felt it, but he laughed at me."

"Well, now, if two of you have the same feeling," added Bumper more gravely, "maybe there is something in the air that disturbs you. Perhaps we're going to have a storm."

"No, it isn't a storm," said Black Cap, shaking his head. "I know that feeling, and this is different."

Once more there was a flutter of wings among the branches, and Yellow Breast the Chat dropped down to the side of Hermit and Black Cap.

"I'm all in a flutter," he said. "I can't make

it out. Something's wrong. I just know it. I feel it in my bones. I just had to come down here for company until the strange feeling goes away."

"Well, now," exclaimed Bumper, sitting back on his haunches, "this is getting interesting, and also quite serious. When all three of you have that strange feeling, I must confess there must be something in it. Now how do you feel, Yellow Breast? Can't you describe the feeling?"

"Why, it's nothing I can put in words," the Chat answered hesitatingly. "It's just a restless feeling that makes me nervous. I feel all the time as if there was danger brooding in the air."

"Don't you think it's all your imagination?" asked Bumper. "I wouldn't let it bother me any more."

The fact was the three birds sitting on the limb were a little ashamed of their nameless fear, and Bumper's remarks added to their confusion. Still they could not deny, it was quite a coincidence that all three should have experienced the same strange feeling.

Fuzzy Wuzz was more in sympathy with them than Bumper, for she sometimes had attacks of the nerves which made her afraid of everything, even of her own shadow.

"I think, Bumper," she interrupted, "that there's something in the air that upsets them. Don't you smell something queer?"

For a moment Bumper sniffed the air, holding his nose far up and trying hard to distinguish any unusual odor or fragrance in it. "No, I can't say that I do," he replied slowly after a while. "Yes, maybe there is a little peculiar odor, but not enough to account for all this disturbance."

From out of the leaves almost at their feet Mrs. Oven-Bird, who had been sitting on her nest, crept forth, and overhearing the remarks sniffed the air, and then exclaimed:

"I don't like the looks of the sun. See how red it is. Now what does that mean?"

"The sun is always red, but sometimes more so than at others," replied Bumper. "Yes, it is very red, but I've seen it that way at sunset."

"But this isn't sunset," replied Yellow Breast the Chat a little impatiently. "It's early in the morning."

There was a startled whirring of wings in the bushes, and every one ducked his head ready for flight, fearing that it might be Dasher the Hawk or even Baldy the Eagle; but it was only Whip-Poor-Will the Night hawk. He was so unused to flying around in

the day time that he was half blinded, and nearly collided with the Chat.

"Ah, me!" he cried. "What's going to happen! I can't set on my nest! Tell me the worst! I can't see to fly around. The sun hurts my eyes. But I must know what it is. I know it's something terrible!"

"We don't know of anything, Whip-Poor-Will," said Bumper. "We were just discussing it when you interrupted. The sun is very red, but not redder than I've seen it before, and Fuzzy Wuzz says she smells something unusual in the air; but beyond that we know no more than you do."

"Then go and find out," said Poor Will impatiently. "I can't go back to my nest in peace until I know."

"But who can tell us?"

"Listen!" exclaimed Chat suddenly. "What's that noise?"

And from sheer nervousness Yellow Breast the Chat crouched lower on the branch and shivered.

"Why," laughed Bumper, "that's nothing but Rusty the Blackbird calling! He's always noisy and chattering. Listen to him!"

But Rusty was much noisier than usual. He was so excited that his voice was raised to a high pitch. He was calling to the other

birds and making a great commotion. When he finally dropped down in front of the burrow he was all out of breath. It took him some time to tell his tale.

"The woods are on fire," he said, "and it's coming this way. I was up on Bald Mountain when it broke out, and I flew as fast as I could to warn everybody."

"Bald Mountain!" exclaimed Bumper. "Why, Rusty, that's miles and miles away from here. That isn't anything to get excited about. I'm surprised that you should get frightened."

Now Rusty liked to carry important news, especially exciting news, and he had felt very big in being the first to tell of the fire; but Bumper's words made him think that he had exaggerated it, and he felt quite crest-fallen. However, in the next story you will read of how the fire spread and raced down Bald Mountain.

STORY VI

THE FIRE IN THE WOODS

Bumper felt that he had performed a real act of kindness in quieting the fright of the birds, especially of Rusty the Blackbird, whose excitement was likely to stir up general fear throughout the woods. Of course, a fire in the woods would be a dreadful thing. They couldn't think of anything worse. But it was unwise to give a false alarm and scare all the young ones.

At the same time Bumper felt a little uneasy. Bald Mountain was a long way off, but the wind was blowing straight from it, and he began to think that perhaps this accounted for the uneasiness of Hermit, Black Cap, Mrs. Oven-Bird and Whip-Poor-Will. Fuzzy Wuzz might have sniffed the odor of smoke on the air, and the frightened birds had sensed the danger in the same way. Also it would account for the blood-red sun.

But Bumper continued to make light of the danger, laughing good-naturedly, and saying that Rusty must have had his wings singed in

flying so fast through the air. "I shouldn't worry about it," he said finally, as he hopped away. "Now go back to your nest Whip-Poor-Will, and you, too, Mrs. Oven-Bird. If anything happens we'll give the alarm."

The birds, now they knew what had caused their restlessness, and being assured by Bumper that timely warning would be given if the fire spread, breathed easier and soon forgot all about it. But not Bumper. He was anxious to find out for himself if the fire was coming toward them.

As soon as he could get away from Fuzzy Wuzz, he ran as fast as he could in the direction of Bald Mountain. It was a long run, but Bumper was feeling fine, and he covered the ground with great speed.

Half way there he stumbled upon Crawler the Tortoise, who was trudging along in the opposite direction. "Where to now, Crawler?" he hailed.

"For the river," replied Crawler without stopping. "I smell smoke, and I'm going to get in the river mud before it's too late."

"The fire's a long distance away, isn't it?" replied Bumper.

"Yes, but it takes me a long time to crawl a short distance. So I'm going to start early."

Bumper thought this was a good idea, and

he made no attempt to detain Crawler. If he couldn't travel any faster than the Tortoise, he would do the same—start early.

Half a mile further he found Hoppy the Toad burrowing into the ground. "What are you digging for, Hoppy?" he asked.

"For a safe place when the fire comes," was the reply. "If I don't burrow down a foot or more I'll be roasted alive."

"Do you think the fire's coming this way?" asked Bumper more alarmed than ever.

"Of course it is! Ask Baldy the Eagle up there! He's so excited he can't do anything but circle around and utter loud cries. He can see what we can't."

Bumper looked up and saw Baldy the Eagle and his mate circling around in great spirals. They were so far from the earth that they looked like tiny specks, but after a while they swooped down and lighted on the decayed stump of a tree.

Ordinarily Bumper wouldn't have dared to speak to Baldy, but fear now had made the Eagles tame and friendly. A fire in the woods changes friends and foes alike.

"O Baldy," Bumper called, "I can't see down here, but you can up there. Tell me if the fire is coming this way, and is there any danger?"

"Yes, Bumper," replied Baldy, glancing down at the white rabbit. "It has swept clear across Bald Mountain, and is now racing down the slope on this side. Our new home is destroyed, and we're fleeing for our lives. If you want to escape you should run for the river."

"Is it as bad as all that!" exclaimed Bumper.

"Come up here and look for yourself!"

Bumper smiled at this remark, for he had no more chance of getting up there in the top of the tree than he had of swimming like Billy the Mink under water.

"You should warn all of your people to flee," Baldy added. "And there's no time to be lost."

Baldy and his mate rose then and flew away, leaving the white rabbit alone. "It must be worse than I thought," he said to himself. "Baldy doesn't get frightened very easily. I must hurry back home."

Just then a great commotion back of him made him turn. Out of a big hole in a tree came Great Horn the Owl.

"What is it!" he cried. Then seeing the white rabbit, he added: "Is it true, Bumper, the woods are on fire?"

"I'm afraid they are, Great Horn. Baldy the Eagle said the fire's coming this way rapidly."

"Then I must pack up and leave at once. But I'm so blind I can't see which way to fly."

"Follow the wind, Great Horn, and you won't need your eyes. It's blowing away from the fire."

"That's so. I'll do it. Thank you for the kind advice, Bumper. Now I must hurry."

"And I, too," said Bumper.

But once more there was a crash, and through the bushes sprang White Tail the Deer. Bumper expected to see Sneaky the Wolf or Buster the Bear after him, but when neither appeared he hailed the deer.

"Is it the fire you're running from, White Tail?" he called.

"Yes, all the woods will be burnt up. You'd better run for the river, Bumper. It's your only chance."

"I think I will."

But he didn't get far before a swarm of birds swept down upon him. There were Piney the Purple Finch, Towhee the Chewink, Mrs. Phoebe Bird, Shrike the Butcher Bird, Mr. Woodpecker, Mr. and Mrs. Pine Grosbeak, Mr. Crested Flycatcher, and all their families and friends. They came in dense clouds, shrieking, crying and making a great noise.

"Run! Run!" they cried as they flew over

his head. "The fire will soon be here, Bumper! Run for your life!"

"I'm going to," said Bumper.

But once more he was so startled by a sudden interruption that he couldn't move. Out of the bushes appeared Mr. Fox, running as if his life depended upon it. Bumper crouched to hide, but Mr. Fox only gave him a side glance, and shouted:

"Run, Bumper! Run to the river! The fire's coming!"

Bumper was so surprised that Mr. Fox should stop long enough to warn him that he simply stared and waited. Even his worst enemy wasn't entirely bad, not if he would take the trouble to warn him when a great danger threatened every living thing in the woods.

"I'll remember that, and not think so badly of Mr. Fox," he said.

Then he thought of his own safety, and was ready once more to run home to warn his people of the danger; but out of the bushes at his feet came a pitiful wailing cry. Bumper stopped, and looked down. It was little Spotty the Chameleon, whose bright colors now were all dark and splotched.

"O Bumper," he wailed, "I can't get away from the fire. I hurt my leg, and can't run at all. I'll be roasted alive."

Bumper was horrified, and stopped to console him, but the air was getting thick with smoke, and he knew that he would have to run if he expected to save his own life. But he couldn't leave Spotty behind to be burnt up.

"Hop on my back, Spotty, and cling to it," he said.

Spotty glad of the chance climbed up, and Bumper started on a mad race through the bushes. In the next story you will read of Bumper's further adventures in the fire.

STORY VII

BUMPER'S MAD RACE WITH THE FIRE

With Spotty the Chameleon clinging to his back, Bumper hopped along as fast as he could to get away from the fire. He was very sure now that it was spreading throughout the woods, for the sun had almost disappeared from view, and the air was thick with choking smoke and fine cinders.

If he needed any further evidence, he had but to look around him and above. The woods were full of big and little animals rushing toward the river for safety, and the air overhead was clouded with flocks of birds winging their way swiftly in the same direction.

Cries of fear came from every side—calls and shouts and whistles. Pandemonium had broken loose. Every one was confused and frightened. All fears of their bitter enemies had been forgotten. Curly the Skunk was racing side by side with Sneaky the Wolf, and Washer the Raccoon with Buster the Bear. Even Loup the Lynx was so terrified that he forgot to snarl when Sleepy the Opossum

bumped against him, and Killer the Snake wriggled past Hoppy the Toad who was still busily digging his hole to crawl in out of danger.

No one seemed to notice Bumper hopping along with Spotty the Chameleon on his back. Ordinarily such a thing would have caused a laugh, and perhaps jeers. But now every one was so terrified that he paid no attention to any one else.

In leaping over a clump of bushes, Bumper suddenly heard a voice call to him. "Oh, Bumper, what am I going to do? I can't run fast enough to beat the fire. Oh! Oh! I shall be roasted alive!"

Bumper stopped and looked down at Lazy the Snail, who was making all the haste he could to get away; but it was a ludicrously slow pace. It seemed as if he almost stood still when he was crawling the fastest.

"Why, Lazy, can't you run faster?" Bumper asked.

"No, you can see I'm doing my best. I never was much of a runner."

"I should think not," laughed Bumper. "I might give you a lift of a few yards, but that wouldn't do much good. The fire would soon catch up to you."

"No, that wouldn't save me," wailed Lazy.

"Nothing will save me. I'm going to be roasted alive."

Bumper looked distressed. The thought of leaving Lazy behind to be burnt up was more than he could stand. Spotty the Chameleon clinging to his back had already become a burden to him, and he felt that another on his back would handicap him dreadfully. However, he couldn't leave Lazy the Snail.

"Crawl up on my back, Lazy, and I'll carry you," he said finally. "But you must hurry! The fire's coming very fast."

Lazy was so slow in crawling up that Bumper several times grew impatient and urged him to hurry. When he was finally on one shoulder, clinging to it with his moist feet, Bumper started off once more. He had to make up for lost time, and he hopped along at the top of his speed.

All the while he was thinking of Fuzzy Wuzz and Old Blind Rabbit. Would they run for the river, or would they wait for him to return? It distressed him to think that he had not been able to warn Whip-Poor-Will and Hermit the Thrush as he had promised. Would they wait for him?

He put forth all his strength to gain on the other animals, and soon found himself in the

lead again. He passed Buster the Bear and Billy the Mink and Sleepy the Opossum.

"I wish I could run as fast as you, Bumper," Sleepy wailed. "I'm afraid I'll be too late."

"No, there's time enough, Billy," replied Bumper. "I want to run ahead to warn Fuzzy Wuzz and Old Blind Rabbit."

"Oh, they'll know the fire's coming long before you reach home. Won't you wait for me? I'm terribly frightened, and if you leave me behind I know I'll die."

Bumper slowed down to comfort Billy. He ran alongside of him for a time to keep him company. This put new heart in Billy, and of course hope gave him strength and he really ran faster than before.

They nearly stumbled over White-Foot the Deer Mouse, who had been running as fast as his little legs would permit him. But he curled up now, and stopped, panting for breath.

"What's the matter, White Foot?" asked Bumper.

"I'm all in," panted White Foot. "I can't run another step. I've run all the way from Bald Mountain today, and I'm too tired to take another step."

"But the fire will catch you here," protested Bumper. "You must try again."

"No, I can't. I tell you I'm exhausted, and my feet are bleeding."

He held up a foot that was covered with blood. Bumper's pity for him was more than he could express in words. "Crawl upon my back, White Foot. I guess I can carry another."

"Thank you, Bumper! You will save my life if you carry me."

And White Foot the Deer Mouse hopped up by the side of Lazy the Snail and Spotty the Chameleon. With this added burden Bumper found that he couldn't run much faster than Sleepy the Opossum.

"I'll have to keep company with you now, Billy," he said. "I can't run faster with so many on my back."

"Why do you carry them, Bumper?" asked Sleepy. "Why don't you let them look out for themselves?"

"For shame on you, Sleepy! Would you leave them behind to be burnt up? No, no, we can't do that. We must help each other."

"I don't see that anybody's helping me," growled Sleepy.

"I thought I was helping you by keeping you company," replied Bumper. "If it isn't doing you any good, I may as well run ahead."

"No, no, don't leave me!" cried Sleepy.

"You are helping me. I didn't mean what I was saying before."

"All right, then! Don't grumble because somebody else is having an easier time than you."

They were approaching the river where it was broad and deep, and some of the animals ahead were squealing and grunting with pleasure. Once across the river, they would be safe from the flames.

"Now we'll soon be there!" exclaimed Bumper hopefully. "I can smell the water, Billy."

"I'm glad of it, for I'm nearly dead."

A little squeaking voice suddenly startled them, and out of a hole in the nearest tree popped the head of Stripe the Chipmunk. "Bumper! Bumper!" he squealed in his high, piping voice. "Is it true the woods are on fire?"

"Yes, Stripe, and you'd better hurry to the river."

"But I can't! I broke my leg last week, and I can't use it. Do you think I'll be safe in this hole?"

"No, of course not! All the trees will fall down and be burnt up."

"Then I'll burn with them. Oh! Oh! What can I do?"

Bumper stopped and looked at him. Stripe was a fat, healthy fellow, and weighed so much that Bumper wondered if he could carry him on his back.

"I'll try to carry you, Stripe," he said finally. "The river is nearby, and maybe I can do it. Run up on my back, and hold tight."

Sleepy the Opossum gained on Bumper after that. The white rabbit couldn't possibly keep up with him. But he reached the river finally, with Stripe the Chipmunk, Lazy the Snail, Spotty the Chameleon and White Foot the Deer Mouse clinging to his back. In the next story you will hear of how they crossed the river.

STORY VIII

HOW THEY CROSSED THE RIVER

It was a strange sight that met them when they reached the edge of the river. All the animals of the woods, big and little, four-legged and two-legged, and those without any legs, such as Killer the Snake, were congregated there on the bank. Some of them who naturally loved the water, such as Billy the Mink and Brownny the Muskrat, were already in the river, swimming for the other side.

But most of them were waiting, dipping their feet in the water, and then withdrawing them. They didn't like to take the long swim unless it was necessary. They kept looking over their shoulders to see if the fire was near, and then glancing longingly at the other shore.

Bumper sighed with relief when he saw Fuzzy Wuzz, Spotted Tail and Old Blind Rabbit waiting for him. "Oh, Bumper, we were so worried about you!" exclaimed Fuzzy Wuzz. "I'm glad you're here!"

"There wasn't any need to worry about

said Stripe the Chipmunk, "but if you'll put me on a chip I can float down the river."

Bumper had forgotten his little charges, and for a moment he was distressed. Then he said to Fuzzy Wuzz: "Find a chip for Stripe so he can float on it, and then swim along by White Foot to see that he doesn't get exhausted. I'll get Pink Nose to carry Spotty across on his back. He'll do it."

He hopped away, and soon brought Pink Nose back with him, who promised to look out for the Chameleon. Lazy said good-bye, and began burrowing into the soft mud. Fuzzy Wuzz put Stripe the Chipmunk on a big chip, and then started to swim across with White Foot the Deer Mouse.

"Now all of you get across," Bumper commanded, "and I'll go back to see if I can do anything for Bobby Gray Squirrel."

"Oh, Bumper, do be careful, and return soon," pleaded Fuzzy Wuzz.

Bumper promised, and then dashed back into the woods. In a very short time he found the smoke growing so dense that it made him gasp. But he raced on directly toward the approaching fire. Pretty soon hot, scorching cinders fell about him, and he could hear the roar of the flames.

The bright light ahead told him he was

nearly upon the fire, but he loped along, making straight for Bobby's tree. When he reached it he began calling frantically.

"Bobby! Bobby!"

A weak little voice responded, and Bumper jumped to where it came from. There curled up in the leaves at the bottom of the big tree was Bobby Gray Squirrel too sick to care whether the fire was near or not.

"What'd you come back for, Bumper?" he asked.

"To save you," was the quick reply.

"You can't do it. I'm too sick and weak to walk."

"Then get on my back, and hold tight. I'll carry you."

"No, Bumper, you couldn't do it. I'm too heavy for you. Run along and save yourself."

"Get on my back, Bobby, and stop talking! Quick now, or we'll both be scorched. The fire's nearly here."

Still protesting, Bobby finally obeyed. He was almost as big as Bumper, but not so fat and heavy, and to hold himself on he had to cling to the white rabbit's neck. This choked Bumper, and made it more difficult for him to run.

But he couldn't stop for that. He had to

hurry, or both of them would be killed by the fire. He hopped along slowly with his burden, and the fire seemed to gain on them. In vain he tried to run faster, but he was doing all he could. His strength was giving out rapidly.

"I can never swim the river with him," he kept thinking. "I'll drown surely, but that's better than being burnt alive."

When he finally reached the water he was too exhausted to jump in. Bobby realized that it was impossible to go further. "You go alone, Bumper, and leave me," Bobby said. "I can't swim, but you can."

"No, I can't swim either," panted Bumper. "I haven't any strength left."

"Hello!" a gruff voice called back of them. "Who can't swim, and why not?"

Buster the Bear stood back of them ready to plunge in the river. Bumper explained in a few words what he had done, and what he hoped to do. Buster looked at him with a curious expression in his eyes.

"Well, well," he said. "It's too bad to spoil a good thing. I guess I'll have to take a hand in it. Now both of you jump on my back, and I'll get you across. I don't mind a little swim like that."

Buster was in earnest and when he invited



IN THIS WAY BUMPER AND BOBBY CROSSED THE RIVER

them both to get on his back the second time, Bobby crawled up and clung to his thick wool, but Bumper had to perch on his head so he wouldn't lose his balance. Then, grinning at the queer burden he was carrying, Buster waded out until the water was over his head, and then began swimming. In this way Bumper and Bobby Gray Squirrel crossed the river to a place of safety. They were the last of the animals of the North Woods to get away from the fire.

If Buster doesn't decide to eat them, or the river doesn't dry up, you'll hear in the next story what happened to them on the other side.

STORY IX

THE TRUCE

That was a great ride across the river on Buster's back. Bobby Gray Squirrel had no difficulty in clinging to the Bear's thick wool, for his claws were made to dig into things and hold on; but Bumper felt like a shipwrecked mariner riding the waves on a cockle-shell. Every time Buster pitched forward, or turned his head sideways or looked up at the sky, Bumper clutched with all four paws at the shaggy head, and felt that he would be dumped into the water to finish the trip alone. It was a balancing act with him that made every moment perilous and uncertain.

Now all the other animals and birds who had escaped from the fire were lined upon the shore, and when they saw Buster the Bear swimming toward them with Bumper the White Rabbit perched on his head and Bobby Gray Squirrel clinging to his back they stared in amazement, rubbing their eyes, and wondering if they were seeing things that were really not so. Then as the truth of the funny

sight dawned upon them, they sat up a shout of welcome. The birds whistled; the animals barked or squealed; Killer the Snake squirmed and hissed, and Rolly Polly and Pink Nose lay back and laughed until the tears streamed down their cheeks.

Suddenly a loud, harsh "Ha! Ha! Ha!" rose above the din. It was Mr. Crow laughing at the funny picture.

The others immediately changed their tune, and the woods rang with laughter. Even Sneaky the Wolf showed his teeth in a grin, and made a noise that sounded like a chuckle and Mr. Fox rolled over and over in convulsions of merriment.

Shrike the Butcher Bird screamed with delight, and forgot his grudge against the other birds, and Singer the Mocking Bird began imitating the cries and chuckles of the others until the forest fairly bubbled with mirthful sounds. Buster didn't quite understand the meaning of it all, but after a while, puffing and panting, he reached shallow water, and began wading ashore.

"Are they laughing at us?" he asked suddenly. "It's no laughing matter," he added with a growl. He objected to being made the butt of a joke, although he liked to play jokes on others.

"They don't mean anything unkind, Buster," Bumper said. "They are happy to think you've saved us."

"Huh! That's a funny way to show it," snorted Buster.

And when he crawled up on dry land, and saw Sneaky the Wolf grinning, he cuffed him on the ear, and added:

"What do you see that's so funny, Sneaky? I didn't see you saving anybody but your own skin."

Sneaky snarled and drew away.

"I wasn't as thoughtful as you, Buster," he sneered. "If I had been I'd carried over two or three rabbits to eat when I got ashore. But Bobby and Bumper will only make a mouthful for you."

"You think I saved them to eat them?" snapped Buster angrily.

"Why, certainly," politely replied Sneaky drawing away from the big paws. "What else would you save them for?"

Bobby and Bumper didn't like the expression on Sneak's face, and they felt like running and hiding, but they decided Buster was a good enough protector for them, and they remained close by his side.

"No, Buster saved them for us," remarked

Mr. Fox slyly. "We ought to thank him for it."

"Come here, Mr. Fox, and thank me," snarled Buster, turning suddenly.

"No, thank you," replied Mr. Fox, trotting to a safe distance. "I can thank you here just as well."

Now that they were all safe on the other side of the river, the old hunting instincts of the bigger animals were returning, and the natural timidity of the smaller ones began to show itself. While caught in the fire a truce had been declared, but they were all safe now.

Brindley the Lame, Crooked Ears, Pink Nose and Rolly Polly began calling their families together to hide in the bushes, and Sleepy the Opossum was taking to the nearest tree, and Brownny the Muskrat was hunting for a convenient hole. The birds were also separating according to their clans—the song birds and thrushes on one side, and Dasher the Hawk, Great Horn the Owl and Baldy the Eagle on the other. Loup the Lynx, who had been resting in the crotch of a tree after his long swim, was crouching and viewing the smaller animals with fierce, hungry eyes.

Bumper saw in a glance that war was about to be declared, and all his people without homes or any secret hiding place would be-

come easy prey to their enemies. His soul troubled him. The slaughter might be almost as great as if they had all been caught in the fire. He felt called upon to do something to avert the tragedy.

"Buster, let me speak to them," he said suddenly, hopping back on the top of the Bear's head where he could look around and see everyone. The sight of the white rabbit on Buster's head once more excited amusement.

Mr. Crow started off with his loud "Ha! Ha!" and Singer the Mocking Bird repeated it. The others couldn't resist it, and they all began laughing again. Bumper felt pleased at this, for when an animal is laughing he can't be very dangerous.

Smiling and bowing, Bumper finally raised a paw, and said: "Now that we're safe from the fire, we must begin life again on this side of the river. It's all new to us, and not one of us has a home. Sneaky and Loup and Mr. Fox were very kind to us when we were caught in the fire. Not one of them tried to kill us. We're going to thank them for that."

Sleepy the Opossum, Washer the Raccoon, Mr. Beaver, Curly the Skunk and all the others nodded their heads, and expressed their thanks in their different ways. Bumper raised his head, and added: "Also we must thank

Baldy the Eagle for not attacking the birds, and Dasher the Hawk and Great Horn the Owl. Instead of attacking us Baldy actually gave us warning of the fire, and in that way helped us."

Baldy looked a little pleased at this, and nodded his head. Great Horn ruffled his feathers in pride, and blinked hard at the sun. Bumper saw that his flattery had a good effect, and while they were still in a pleasant mood he made haste to propose his plan.

"Now I'm sure they're going to give us another chance," he went on. "None of us has a home, and it will take several days for all of us to make new ones. Baldy wants to find a new one for his mate, and Loup is anxious to please Mrs. Loup, who is waiting for him. Now why not declare a truce for two days until we can all get settled again on this side of the river? Isn't that fair?"

Sneaky and Mr. Fox looked a little uncertain, but Mrs. Loup the Lynx settled it for her lord and husband. "Yes," she said, "that's fair. Come on, Loup, and help me find a new home."

Baldy's mate, who was a little cross at being driven away from her nest on Bald Mountain, was equally anxious to begin housekeeping in their new place. She whispered a word or

two, and Baldy flapped his wings, and the two flew away together.

"How about you, Sneaky and Mr. Fox?" growled Buster, turning to these two. "Are you going to live up to the truce?"

"Why—er—" stammered Mr. Fox.

"If you don't," interrupted Buster, "I'll make you. To tell you the truth, I'd like a few boxing lessons with you and Sneaky."

"Yes, yes, of course, we agree," replied Mr. Fox and Sneaky hurriedly.

"Then the meeting is over," declared Buster. "Now every one trot away, and begin house hunting. Is that right, Bumper?"

"Yes, Buster," replied the white rabbit, climbing down. "And if you ever need a friend, don't forget that Bobby and I owe our lives to you. We can never thank you enough."

"Oh, that's all right!" grinned Buster, as he lumbered away. So the meeting was ended, and the animals and birds began to separate. How they found new homes in the woods, and the adventures that befell them will be told in the next story.

STORY X

HOUSE HUNTING IN THE WOODS

The great fire that had swept away the woods in which they had always lived made every one of the birds and animals homeless. Of course, they were thankful they had escaped the flames, but they had lost all their possessions. Nobody had carried anything away with him.

The next two days were spent in house hunting. They were busy days you can imagine. It is no easy thing for even the birds and animals to pick up a home and start house-keeping again. There are so many things to consider.

For instance, the first hole Washer the Raccoon entered was the entrance to an ideal home for him, but Billy the Porcupine entered from another side at the same time. A dispute immediately followed.

"This is my home," said Billy, bristling up his spines.

"No, it isn't," retorted Washer. "I got here first."

"No such thing. I discovered it first. Because you can run faster doesn't matter. It's the question of which discovers it first."

"Possession is half the law," retorted Washer, showing his teeth. "And I have possession."

"How can you prove that when I'm in possession, too?" snapped Billy. "I'm here, and you can't put me out."

"I can, and will," said Washer, and he made a quick dart at Billy, who curled up so suddenly that his sharp spines bristled on every side.

Washer danced around him, but he was unable to get at Billy, who laughed and shouted: "Now who's got possession?"

Washer wasn't to be bullied, however, and retorted: "I'll starve you out. You don't dare uncurl. If you do I'll get you. Now we'll see who owns the place."

But Billy had a ready answer. "If I starve you'll starve too. The minute you go out for food, I'll go too. Now what are you going to do?"

Washer recognized the truth of this, and was silent. He watched Billy with angry eyes, but he was still afraid of the bristling ball of sharp quills. They were in this attitude of

waiting when Bumper appeared at the mouth of the hole.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, addressing Fuzzy Wuzz. "This looks like a promising place. Let's investigate it."

He ran in the hole, and came up against Washer the Raccoon. "You in here, Washer?" he asked. "I didn't know you were here. Then I must look for some other place for a home."

"Yes, I'm here," replied Washer crossly. "And so is Billy the Porcupine. There he is sulking in the corner. He refused to leave when I ordered him out."

"He had no right to order me away, Bumper," Billy said, uncurling. "I discovered the hole first, and came here to claim it for a home."

"But I beat him down here," interrupted Washer, "and the one that gets first in a hole has a right to it. Isn't that the law of the woods, Bumper?"

"Well, well!" said Bumper, scratching his nose thoughtfully. "You're both right, I suppose, but one must be wrong."

"I discovered it first," interrupted Billy, "and that made it mine."

"And I was first down here," said Washer angrily.

"It seems to me," remarked Bumper, "that

this is a knotty question to settle. Suppose you both give it up, and then neither will have the advantage."

"Huh!" growled Washer. "You want it for yourself."

"I don't see why I should give it up," added Billy, "not even to you, Bumper."

"You misunderstand me, Billy. I didn't want it for myself, but you and Washer can't stand here forever disputing about the ownership. You'd never get settled. We want peace in the new woods."

The dispute might have lasted indefinitely, for Bumper was puzzled how to settle it; but just as he was thinking he would have to give it up Groundy the Woodchuck rushed down the hole, and seeing so many there he stopped in surprise.

"Hello! I didn't know I had company in my new home!" he exclaimed. "Well, I'm glad to see all of you. It's a nice comfortable home, isn't it? Almost as good as the one I had in the North Woods. Welcome all of you!"

"Well, if that isn't the limit!" exclaimed Washer.

"The idea!" said Billy, uncurling a little more. "I guess you don't own the whole woods, Groundy."

"No, I don't claim any such thing, Billy," replied Groundy. "But I do claim this place. Why shouldn't I? I discovered it first, and started to make my nest here."

"You did, eh?" snapped Washer. "I was the first one down here, and it's mine."

"I discovered it first, and it's mine," echoed Billy.

Bumper saw that the dispute was likely to cause hard feeling between the three friends, and he wished to settle it in a friendly way.

"When did you find it, Groundy?" he asked. "And were you down here before?"

"Yes, hours ago."

"Well, I've been here for ever and ever so long," said Billy. "Washer knows that, for he's been here too."

"Yes, we came in here a long time ago, and Groundy wasn't in sight then. I don't believe he was ever here before. He's just saying that to claim the hole."

Groundy showed some impatience, and then spying something way down in the bottom of the burrow he smiled. Washer and Billy, who had joined together to dispute his right, looked in the same direction, but they could see nothing.

"If I prove that I discovered the burrow first, and was down here before either Billy or

Washer, is it my home?" Groundy asked, turning to Bumper.

"Yes, that's only fair. It's the law of the woods, and Billy and Washer should agree to it. You will, won't you?"

He turned and addressed the two sulking animals.

"Yes, I will," Billy assented after a pause.

"I too," said Washer, "but he's got to prove it, and not make up a story."

"I'll prove it," smiled Groundy. "I don't have to make up any story. Billy, look in the corner there and tell me what's under those leaves."

Billy wondering what he meant by this remark obeyed. There was a big ball of leaves at the bottom that he hadn't noticed there before, and when he pawed around in them there was a little squeak, and up popped the heads of three little woodchucks. They were the children of Groundy, which he and Mrs. Groundy had brought from their old home safely across the river. They were stowed away snugly in the hole, and had been fast asleep.

"Well, how'd they get down here?" gasped Billy.

"I brought them here hours ago," replied Groundy. "That's my evidence that I was here before either you or Washer."

Washer laughed good-naturedly. "I guess you've proved your point, Groundy, and I for one will leave. I couldn't drive out those dear little woodchucks."

"Nor me either," said Billy, smiling down at the sleepy youngsters.

"Then I guess we'd all better leave," remarked Bumper, "and let Groundy have the burrow."

So the dispute of ownership was settled, and all hopped away, leaving Groundy in possession. The next story will be about how Bumper settled a dispute between Pink Nose and Rolly Polly.

STORY XI

PINK NOSE AND ROLLY POLLY

Bumper, finding that Groundy was entitled to the burrow he and Fuzzy Wuzz had entered, hopped away in search of another place. Of course, there had been a grand scramble in the woods for the choice sites. Just like people when new land is thrown open for settlement, every one of the animals made a rush for the best holes.

This naturally caused all sorts of conflicts, and disputes rose on every side. The choicest places were close to the river where they would have water right at their door. But Billy the Mink and Brownny the Muskrat had the first right to these water sites, for they couldn't live inland. Their homes had to be near or under the water. Mr. Beaver likewise had to have a swimming pool adjoining his home, and he came in next for river views.

Fortunately Sneaky the Wolf and Mr. Fox, as well as Loup the Lynx, preferred dens in the very heart of the woods, and they prowled around in the thickest places, leav-

ing the smaller animals to dispute about sites on the water front.

Even the rabbits wanted to be within a short distance of the river. "If we have a fire on this side some day," remarked Pink Nose, "I want to be so close to the river I can cross it in the middle of the night."

"Goodness me!" exclaimed Rolly Polly. "Don't speak about another fire! I don't think I could go through another one."

"It frightened me so," said Crooked Ears, "that I'm sure some of my hairs turned gray. Certainly I feel years older."

"Yes," added Brindley the Lame, "it was a terrible experience, but finding new homes for all our families is nearly as heart-rending. I declare, I've hunted nearly everywhere, and haven't found a place yet to suit me. When I do find one that seems just right somebody is ahead of me and takes possession."

"That reminds me," laughed Bumper, "of the experience of Billy Porcupine and Washer the Raccoon. They thought they both discovered a home at the same time, and neither would give in."

Then he related the story of how Groundy the Woodchuck had proven to them that neither one had any right to the burrow, for he had been ahead of them.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Rolly Polly. "That was a good one, and served Billy and Washer right for being so selfish."

"But they both thought they were right," said Bumper, "yet one of them must have been wrong. Which would you say was in the right, Rolly Polly?"

"Neither," was the prompt retort. "They were both wrong, and very selfish. If each had given in to the other there would have been no dispute."

"Would you have given in?"

"Certainly! Who wouldn't?"

"I'm sure I would," said Pink Nose. "I quite agree with Rolly Polly."

"Well, I'm glad to hear it," said Bumper, smiling. "There wouldn't be any disputes if all were as unselfish as you and Rolly Polly."

Perhaps Pink Nose and Rolly Polly thought they would be unselfish, and they could condemn Billy and Washer without having to be put to a real test. But sometimes when we boast of our virtues we soon get in a fix where we have to prove our words. Now this was just what happened to Rolly Polly and Pink Nose.

They started out shortly in different directions to renew the search for a home site. Rolly Polly, after much wandering around,

came to a clump of trees which seemed to offer an ideal home for his family.

"I'll burrow down under that big tree," he said, "and make a spacious home for my little ones. The dirt is soft and smooth here, and the roots of the tree will make a good foundation for the tunnels."

Satisfied that he had at last found just what he had been looking for, he began digging. First he dug straight down a foot under the biggest root, and then ran his tunnel along under the tree. When he reached the middle he intended to run tunnels on either side, and build his burrow.

He worked hard for several hours until the hole was big enough to suit him. "I must be nearly under the middle of the tree," he mused, and stopped to rest a minute.

Suddenly there was a noise of scratching and scraping. At first he thought it was outside, and he lay very quiet in the hole, but a moment later he was sure that the digging came from underneath. A little frightened, he waited and listened.

Some animal was digging down on the opposite side of the big tree. Rolly Polly was ready to run if the animal proved to be an enemy, but before he could leave the dirt

crumbled before him, and the head of Pink Nose was thrust through the opening.

"What a scare you gave me!" exclaimed Rolly Polly. "I thought the Hound or Mr. Fox was after me."

"You gave me a shock, too," replied Pink Nose. "I didn't know you were here until I saw you."

"Yes, I've found a home for my family at last. I chose this big tree, and I've dug a tunnel clear under it. But what are you doing, Pink Nose?"

"Digging a burrow for my family. Can't you see for yourself? I started on the other side of the tree, and I've dug clear down to here."

"Yes, but you can't have this place," protested Rolly Polly. "I've selected it for my burrow."

"And I've selected it for mine. See what a long tunnel I've dug."

"Not longer than mine."

"Oh, yes, it is. Just to show you I'll measure it, and then we'll measure yours."

"All right! It's agreed that the one who's dug the longest tunnel has the place for his burrow. Is that right?"

"Yes, I'll agree to that."

They measured first one, and then the other.

Then they measured them again, and frowned. They were exactly the same length.

"Now what are you going to do?" asked Pink Nose.

"Stay here, of course. I have as much right as you."

"Then I'll stay, too. You can't frighten me away, and I don't intend to have all my work for nothing."

Bumper found them in this unyielding state of mind, with neither one willing to give way to the other. Recalling their remarks about Billy Porcupine and Washer the Raccoon, Bumper smiled to himself. After all they were not much less selfish than Billy and Washer when put to the real test. It is always easier to preach than practice.

"It seems to me," Bumper remarked after a while, "that we'd better make a two-family house out of this burrow. That's the simplest solution of the problem."

"How can we do that?" asked Rolly Polly. "I never heard of such a thing. My family could never live with Pink Nose's family."

"No, but you could dig to the right, and Pink Nose to the left, starting from this meeting point," Bumper explained. "Your burrow would be on the right, and Pink Nose's on the left, and you could each use your own

entrance to it. Then you wouldn't have to do the work you've done all over again."

This pleased both of them, and they began burrowing to the right and left until they had the first two-family house ever built in the woods. Each had its separate entrance, which met in a common hall at their doors. The next story will tell of Downy the Woodpecker and Belt the Sapsucker.

STORY XII

DOWNY THE WOODPECKER AND BELT THE SAPSUCKER

Not all the trouble in establishing themselves in the new woods was confined to the animals. The coming of so many birds across the river all at once, each without a home or nesting place, caused a great amount of confusion. There were trees aplenty, but not every tree is suitable for a bird's nest.

Piney the Purple Finch, for instance, wanted the same high branch to build his nest on that Mr. Pine Grosbeak had chosen, and they quarreled over it until Shrike the Butcher Bird came along and drove them both away with his shrill cries and threatening manner. Yellow Breast the Chat found a tangled thicket under a big pine for his home, but Towhee the Chewink objected, for he had made his new home in that thicket. Hermit the Thrush had been fortunate in finding an ideal home for her brood, and was perfectly satisfied until she found Great Horn the Owl

had taken possession of a hole in a rotten tree branch directly over her head.

And so it was with all the others. There were confusion and disputes and mistakes, and all sorts of heart aches and disappointment. But the saddest was the trouble between Downy the Woodpecker and Belt the Sapsucker.

Now Downy and Belt were close relations, first cousins, in fact, and they should have known better; but then relatives, even brothers and sisters, sometimes have their quarrels, and we can't entirely blame Belt and Downy.

It was this way. Downy found a hole in the rotten trunk of a tall tree, and immediately began hollowing it out a little more so he could build his nest at the bottom. Then Belt, who had had poor luck finding a place for his home, saw the tree, and immediately became jealous of his cousin. And envy generally breeds unpleasant thoughts and deeds. Belt determined to drive Downy away by methods that later he was ashamed of.

"You're surely not going to build your nest in that hole Downy!" Belt exclaimed.

"Why, yes, I am! Why shouldn't I?"

"Well, if you want Hoot the Owl in your family it's none of my affair," was the reply.

"Hoot the Owl! Is he around here?" ex-

claimed Downy, in genuine surprise and alarm.

"Around here!" laughed Belt. "Didn't you see him digging out that hole to build his nest? Surely you must see marks of his claws in the wood."

Downy was so frightened that he thought he saw the marks of Hoot's claws all around him. Yes, he was certain that the hole had been dug out by Hoot, and he could smell the odors of the owl at the bottom now that his attention was called to it.

"Thank you for telling me, Belt," he said. "Of course, I don't want to build anywhere near Hoot. No, no, not within a mile of him. I'll go as far away as I can."

And he flew away, leaving Belt in possession. It was a wicked trick, but Belt felt that the circumstances warranted a little deception. He wanted the hole in the worst way, and now that Downy had abandoned it, why, of course, he had a right to take it. He began almost immediately to fix it up. He dug a little deeper into the heart of the tree with his strong bill until he had a hole that just satisfied him.

Then he flew away to gather leaves and grass for the nest. He made many trips until the nest was nearly all built. He wanted it

finished before Mrs. Belt arrived, but night came with it only three-quarters finished.

"I think I'll sleep in it tonight," he said, "and then finish it early in the morning."

He went to bed early, as all self-respecting birds do, and was fast asleep shortly after dusk. He was dreaming of pleasant things when he was suddenly awakened by a noise outside. He sat up and listened. It was Mr. Hoot the Owl and his mate sitting on the doorstep of his home talking.

"I think this hole will do very well for us," Hoot was saying. "It's the best I can find."

"I don't know," replied Mrs. Hoot. "We might find a better place if we looked further."

"Haven't we looked all over the woods?" asked Hoot impatiently. "I'm dreadfully tired, and this house hunting tires me more than anything else in the world. The last place I selected you didn't like because it was too near the river, and now this one is way back."

"It's too far away from all my friends, too," objected Mrs. Hoot. "I don't like to live off alone. I want to be near other people."

"Yes, that's it—always objecting!" exclaimed Hoot irritably. "Well, then, if you

can find a better place go and look for it. This suits me."

"Now please don't get angry," replied Mrs. Hoot. "I didn't say this place didn't please me. I can't tell until we look it over. Suppose we go inside and see how it is in there. Of course, there will have to be many improvements made. I never saw a house ready-made for me that was satisfactory in all respects."

"No, indeed," replied Hoot. "But I'll look inside."

You can imagine Belt's feelings! There he was shut up in the hole with Hoot the Owl coming down to look around. Oh, what could he do! Why had he deceived Downy! Now he was going to be punished for his lie.

"If I ever get out of here alive," he breathed, "I'll never tell another lie. I'll never deceive any one again."

But of course this didn't get him out. Nothing could! The entrance was blocked by Hoot and his mate. Then he heard Hoot scrambling through the opening. In another minute he would discover Belt crouched at the bottom of the hole.

"Oh, dear, the hole is altogether too small for us," he heard Hoot say. "No, this will never suit you. It will take more repairing

than it's worth. I'll have to make the entrance twice as large."

"Then if we're going to look further come on right away," said Mrs. Hoot. "We've got to find a suitable place before morning."

After a few more words they flew away. Belt heard them go, and a great relief came to him. It seemed too good to be true. He wasn't going to be eaten up after all. He was so thankful that he said to himself before he dropped off to sleep again, "In the morning I'll tell Downy he can have the hole. I'll confess all to him."

But when the sun appeared, and Belt peeped out of the hole to see the light of a new day, he was so pleased with the beauty of the woods that he regretted he had decided to give up his home to Downy. For a moment his decision wavered. Then he said: "No, I'll keep my word. I'll tell Downy at once."

He flew away into the woods until he found his cousin. Downy listened to his story, and then shook his head:

"You deserve the scare you got, Belt, but I forgive you for telling me that story. However, I don't want the hole. I've found one that suits me better. You can have the old one."

So it really worked out for the best, and



AFTER A FEW MORE WORDS THEY FLEW AWAY

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Belt took permanent possession of the old hole, which he took good care not to enlarge so Hoot could get in, and Downy remained in happy possession of the new one he had found.

In the next story you will hear how Killer the Snake broke the truce in the woods and got himself in trouble.

STORY XIII

HOW KILLER THE SNAKE BROKE THE TRUCE

Of all the creatures of the woods Killer the Snake had the reputation for sly deception that made him the most distrusted. Perhaps his reputation was not founded upon justice, but at any rate Bumper was not easy in mind when Killer crawled away in the bushes, after the agreement, without a word as to his intentions.

Killer's favorite pastime was robbing nests of their eggs and young birds, or hunting Hoppy the Toad, which he swallowed whole. When such food was not to be found, he would sometimes raid the burrows of the larger animals. He had been known to run off with the young of Gray Back the Weasel and Stripe the Chipmunk.

Bumper's fears that Killer might cause trouble seemed unfounded, however, and nothing was heard of Killer for the first day and night. Everybody seemed so busy finding a home that no one gave any attention to his coming and going.

Rusty the Blackbird reported that Killer was in the thick woods, but what he was doing there he could not say. He had kept an eye on him for a time, and then had to fly away to attend to his own business. The rest of the birds had not seen him at all, and his presence was something of a mystery.

On the second day, however, Bumper was returning to a burrow that he and Fuzzy Wuzz had discovered for their future home, when he was startled by the plaintive cries of Hermit the Thrush among the bushes. At first Bumper thought Hermit was talking to her mate, but when the cries increased he hopped in her direction.

"What's all the noise about, Hermit?" he called. "Can't you find a place for your new home?"

"Oh, Bumper," exclaimed Hermit, fluttering toward him, "Killer is trying to rob my nest. I have one egg in it, and he's going to steal it."

Bumper gave a big jump through the bushes, and landed close to the place where Killer was coiled. Near him was Hermit's nest in a small bush just off the ground. A tiny greenish egg was in it.

"Killer, if you break the law of the woods you'll be punished," Bumper exclaimed in

anger. "The truce between the animals and birds hasn't ended yet."

Killer turned defiantly upon the white rabbit, and hissed: "Don't bother your head, Bumper. This egg doesn't belong to you. Now run along, and forget it."

"You remember what I did to you the other day, Killer," Bumper replied. "Well, this time you won't get off so easily. If you don't go away immediately, I'll call all the birds and animals of the woods to punish you. They will outlaw you, and be your enemy forever."

"That wouldn't be anything new, Bumper," hissed Killer. "They're my enemies now. I'm going to have this egg for my breakfast. I'm mighty hungry."

"No, you're not," answered Bumper, springing toward him. Killer dodged back and then shot his head forward as if to strike, but Bumper dodged and landed on the other side. His idea was to play the same game on Killer that had been so successful before but they were in a tangled thicket now, and not out in an open space.

He soon found it impossible to run around Killer in a circle until he got him dizzy watching. Indeed, Killer had the advantage of him. He could turn and crawl through the thicket much faster than the rabbit. Once in

his effort to escape the darting head of the snake, Bumper stumbled and got caught in the bushes. Killer laughed heartily.

"In another minute I'd had you," he said. "You can't play that old trick on me in here. If you don't look out I'll get you yet, and choke you to death. If I once coil my body around you it will be the last time you'll interfere with me."

Bumper began to realize that he was in real danger, for there was little room in the bushes for him to hop around, and if he got caught once in the thicket Killer could crawl upon him and strangle him to death. So he had to be more cautious. He kept at a greater distance, but made darts at the serpent as if he intended to jump at him. Killer approached nearer, driving him further and further away from the nest.

"Now come on and fight me," Killer jeered. "What's the matter? Are you afraid of me?"

"Hermit! Hermit!" Bumper called over his shoulder.

When there was no response, Killer laughed at him.

"Hermit's left you," he said. "She's afraid to stay here. She didn't think enough of her egg to fight for it, but she let you risk your

life to protect it. Now you see how much friendship amounts to!"

Bumper kept on calling, but Killer was apparently right. Hermit had left, and was not within hearing distance. Still for the sake of making Killer observe the truce, Bumper stood his ground, and took every advantage he could to run in and snap his teeth.

In spite of this the snake drove him away, and then crawled back to the nest. He reached the bush and started to climb it. Bumper made a furious rush to frighten him away. Then he stopped. He couldn't go forward nor backward. He was caught in the thick bushes, with his plump body jammed in between two stout saplings and his neck entangled among briars and bushes.

"Ah! Ha!" exclaimed Killer jubilantly. "You're caught now, and I'll make short work of you. After I've strangled you to death, I'll eat the egg at my leisure."

Bumper struggled frantically to get loose, and Killer approached him, with his forked tongue darting out threateningly. Bumper suddenly felt weak and faint. The sight of Killer drawing nearer frightened him. He could neither run away nor protect himself.

It did seem like the last of Bumper. Killer was certain that he had him, and Bumper

thought so too. With his neck caught in the vines, the rabbit couldn't even turn to face his enemy. But neither one had reckoned with Hermit the Thrush.

It is true she had flown away, but not for the purpose of deserting Bumper. She thought Bumper would keep Killer busy until she could summon help.

And what a lot of helpers she found! When Killer was within a foot of Bumper there was a sudden sound of whirring wings, and the forest was darkened by the flight of birds that swooped down upon them. There were Rusty the Blackbird and his mate, Singer the Mocking Bird, Piney the Purple Finch, Belt the Sapsucker, Yellow Breast the Chat, and goodness knows how many others! It seemed as if all the birds of the North Woods were there, whistling, calling, crying and shrieking.

Killer looked up and caught sight of this great host, and then ducked his head. He tried to crawl away and hide in the bushes, but the birds found him and darted down at him. Their sharp bills caught him in the head, the body, the tail, and wherever he was the most sensitive.

Killer tried to fight back at first, but there were too many for him. They attacked him on all sides, and punished him so that he ached

and pained all over. Then he ran, and the birds followed him. Again and again they pecked him. It was like sticking dozens of needles in his body.

Finally he discovered a hole in the ground, and disappeared in it, but not until after he had been wounded so many times that he could not count them. It was a proper punishment for breaking the truce, and the birds were glad they had been in time to save Hermit's egg. They helped the rabbit to get out of the thicket, and then all talked together and laughed and sang until the woods echoed with the noise. Next story will tell of an adventure with Sneaky and Mr. Fox.

STORY XIV

AN ADVENTURE WITH SNEAKY AND MR. FOX

As the end of the two days of truce declared by the animals in the woods drew near, Bumper was pleased to find that all of his friends had new homes and were contentedly settled in them. Pink Nose, Rolly Polly, Crooked Ears and Brindley the Lamé had found burrows carefully hidden in the heart of the forest for their families. Mr. Beaver had constructed a new dam and a run-way from it to a house in the middle of the stream. Billy the Mink and Brownny the Muskrat had burrowed under the river's embankment a most elaborate system of tunnels for their hiding places.

The birds had likewise found nests for their little ones, some swinging from the top branches of tall trees, and others hidden under the leaves on the ground. White Tail the Deer had retired to a lonely part of the forest for his home; Bobby Gray Squirrel and Stripe the Chipmunk had made their nests in secret holes in the trees. Even Spotty the Chame-

leon was settled, and Lazy the Snail was safe in the mud.

“Everything’s all right now—just as it was before the fire,” remarked Bumper as he hopped through the woods toward his own burrow, after making a round of the woods to see if any of his friends were still homeless. He had made so many friends now that it took him a long time to visit them in turn, and he was very tired.

When he came to a wide clearing stretching across his path, he stopped at the edge to look around. He had never been there before, and he was a little cautious. It might be a trap set for him by the Hunters, and he sniffed the air to see if the Hounds were near.

Then he hopped across it until he came to a deep hole or pit in the middle. He wondered what this was for, and stopped at the brink of it to look down. It was a bare, empty pit, with no sign of a trap near it.

Suddenly from behind there came a rush of small feet, and Mr. Fox shouted aloud, “Now I’ve got you, Bumper!”

So swiftly had Mr. Fox jumped out of the bushes that Bumper had merely a second to think. He couldn’t retreat, for Mr. Fox was immediately behind him. There seemed to be only one thing to do. He took a flying leap

across the pit, hoping to reach the other side in safety.

But it was a wide pit. No rabbit could hop across it. Bumper would never have tried it if he hadn't been excited. He missed the other side by a yard, and tumbled straight into the pit. He landed on the bottom with a thump, and then looked up. Mr. Fox was grinning down at him.

"I thought you'd do that," he said. "That's why I waited until you were looking in the pit. Your curiosity will cost you dearly, Bumper."

"But Mr. Fox, the truce isn't up yet," pleaded Bumper. "Surely you won't break your word of honor."

"No," grinned the Fox, "I won't break my word, but I'll keep you here until morning, and then breakfast off you. That wouldn't be breaking my word."

"I don't intend to stay in here until morning," replied Bumper.

"How'll you get out?" laughed the Fox.

Bumper tried jumping up the side of the pit, but every time he failed Mr. Fox rolled over and laughed. He couldn't jump up the sides any more than he could leap across the pit, and Mr. Fox knew it.

But in one corner Bumper spied a small

hole which the water had made in the soft earth. The pit was drained through this hole, and Bumper immediately saw a way of escape.

What he should have done was to race for the hole the moment he discovered it, but he hesitated until Mr. Fox's keen eyes saw it too. With a snarl of rage, the Fox reared on his hind feet, and when Bumper started for the mouth of the hole he leaped into the pit. He reached the corner first, and blocked the hole.

"Ho! Ho!" he laughed. "You thought you'd get out that way. Well, I'm going to watch at this hole until morning. Then I'll catch you and eat you for breakfast."

Bumper retreated to the other side of the pit. He looked all around for another way out, but not finding any he squatted down in a corner to think. Mr. Fox sat down in front of the hole, and licked his chops. He could afford to keep his word and not attack Bumper until the two days were up, for Bumper was a prisoner.

But pretty soon along came Sneaky the Wolf. He sniffed around and smelling Mr. Fox came and looked down the pit. "Good morning, Mr. Fox," he said politely. "What are you doing down there?"

Now the sight of Sneaky alarmed the Fox.

He dreaded the Wolf as much as Bumper feared the Fox. He had an unpleasant idea that he would have great difficulty in getting out of the pit.

"I was taking a nap, Mr. Wolf," he replied in a trembling voice.

"Then I think I'll come down and take one with you, Mr. Fox."

"Oh, no, please don't," pleaded Mr. Fox. "You know the truce isn't up yet, Sneaky."

"No, but it will be in the morning. I can afford to wait until then for my breakfast."

And with that Sneaky leaped down into the pit. He trotted around, grinning and nodding his head. "What's behind you, Mr. Fox?" he asked, coming closer. "Oh, a hole! You thought you could escape through that. If you don't mind I'll watch there until morning."

Mr. Fox took the hint, and jumped away. He ran around the pit, and made a few desperate efforts to leap out of it, but he couldn't more than reach three-quarters of the way up. Bumper watched him in silence, and Sneaky grinned at every failure, and shouted with glee:

"Try it again, Mr. Fox! If you don't succeed at first, try, try again.

The jeering of Sneaky alarmed Mr. Fox so

that he tried again and again to scramble out of the pit. Then he sneaked off in a corner to think.

Right then, when Sneaky was so sure of his morning's breakfast, Loup the Lynx came along. One glance down the pit brought a horrid grin to his ugly face. His eyes glowed, and his tail lashed with delight.

"Ah! Ha!" he cried. "How'd you get down there, Sneaky?" he called. "Fell in, and can't get out?"

"No, indeed," replied Sneaky boldly, as his heart beat rapidly. "I can leap out any time I want to."

"Let me see you do it."

"No, thank you, I'm satisfied where I am."

"Well, then," added Loup, "I think I'll come down and keep you company until morning. I'm going to be very hungry then. I've fasted for two days now."

And Loup the Lynx dropped into the pit. Sneaky made a desperate effort to leap out, but he too failed. What Bumper and Mr. Fox failed in doing was beyond his reach. He fell back repeatedly, while Loup doubled up with glee and laughed until the forest rang with echoes of it.

"You can't do it, Sneaky," he shouted.

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“And in the morning I’ll have a fine breakfast. A pleasant night to you.”

Sneaky ran away and sat down in a corner to think, while Loup closed one eye in sleep, but kept the other wide open. What happened to them in the pit will follow in the next story.

STORY XV

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PIT

Meanwhile Bumper had been crouching in his corner, partly hidden from view by a few leaves blown into the pit by the wind. Neither Sneaky nor Loup had seen him, and Mr. Fox was so troubled by the presence of his two enemies in the pit that he gave scant attention to the white rabbit. He had no stomach now for breakfast or dinner. His one desire was to get away safely before morning.

Unfortunately for Bumper, Loup had taken up his watchful position directly in front of the small hole. If he would only move a little to one side, the white rabbit could escape. While the hole was too small for Mr. Fox or Sneaky to squeeze through, Bumper could easily get in it.

All night long Bumper kept a watchful eye on Loup and the mouth of the hole. Once the Lynx got up and yawned, stretching his great, powerful legs, but he didn't change his

place. The moon came out, partly flooding the pit with its bright light. Bumper crouched in the shadows and waited.

Mr. Fox and Sneaky were so quiet that Loup grew suspicious. He raised his head and glared around him. One side of the pit was in dark shadow, and he crept toward it to see if all was well with his victim.

This was Bumper's opportunity. Quick as a flash he darted across the pit. In the moonlight his white coat was hardly visible. It was not until Loup heard the crunch of his feet on the sand that the Lynx was aware of his presence. Then he made a dive for him, but Bumper scooted into the hole and escaped.

"If I'd known that rabbit was down here," growled Loup, "I'd kept watch at that hole." Then grinning wickedly, he added: "But a rabbit or two doesn't make much difference so long as I have you, Sneaky."

Sneaky the Wolf made no reply, but sulked in his corner. He was debating in his mind whether it wouldn't be better to attack Mr. Fox, and offer him as a peace offering. Perhaps Loup would be satisfied with that, and then let him go.

"Loup," he said, "Mr. Fox is down here, too. Now if you'll promise to let me go, I'll catch him and give him to you for breakfast.

He's much tenderer and fatter than I, and I'm sure you'd like him."

"Ah! Ha! So Mr. Fox is down here, is he?" said Loup, licking his jaws. "Then my breakfast and dinner's all prepared for me."

"But if you don't let me go," whined Sneaky, "I'll help Mr. Fox to get away."

This threat amused Loup, and he rolled over and over with laughter. "How would you help him, Sneaky?" he asked finally. "The two of you together couldn't get out of this pit. No, no, you're prisoners, and I'm doing you both a favor by eating you. If I didn't you'd die down here from slow starvation. Now you see how good I am to you."

"Perhaps you can't jump out either," replied Sneaky. "No, I don't believe you can."

"What a joke!" laughed Loup. "Just to show you, I'll jump out, and then back again."

He crouched for the spring, the great muscles of his hind legs knotting in big lumps. Then his body shot upward like a stone released from a spring trap. But he didn't reach the top. Oh, no, not by a couple of yards! He clawed and scratched at the sides of the pit, but the loose sand rolled down the side and carried him with it. Dumfounded and angered by this mishap, he made another spring, but again he fell short.

Six times Loup tried it, and failed. Then he trotted around and tried it on the opposite side of the pit. But he failed just as the others had. He couldn't leap out of the pit, try as he would.

"What did I tell you, Loup," exclaimed Sneaky triumphantly. "We're all prisoners down here, and instead of fighting each other we should try to think of some way of escape. Three minds are better than one."

"What can you suggest, Sneaky?" asked Loup, whose defiant spirit was considerably tamed now.

"Why, I don't know. Perhaps if I could stand on your back, and Mr. Fox on mine, one of us could get out. Mr. Fox surely could, and then he could throw down something to help us out."

"I wouldn't trust you," growled Loup. "Neither would I trust Mr. Fox. He'd run away, and leave us here."

"Oh, no, I wouldn't, Loup," replied Mr. Fox.

Loup considered. No, he wouldn't trust either of them. Neither would Sneaky or Mr. Fox trust him. Just because each had a bad reputation for deceit, neither dared help the other to get out. It is generally so with those

who lie and deceive. There is little honor among thieves.

Meanwhile, Bumper had scurried through the hole, and found his way out under the river's embankment. The water from the pit drained through to the river, and this accounted for the long tunnel.

"My, how thankful I am to get out with a whole skin!" he exclaimed. "It was a narrow escape."

He cleaned the dirt from his white fur, and glanced up happily at the moon. "It will go hard with Mr. Fox and Sneaky," he added. "I suppose Loup will kill both of them."

He shuddered at the very thought, and hopped along in silence. In a short time he stopped again. He couldn't get out of his mind the thought of Mr. Fox's fate and of Sneaky's. After all they would suffer just as much in being killed as he would. Of course, in a way they deserved it, for they intended to kill him.

"Still, I can't bear to think of them suffering so," he reflected, "not even if they did intend to eat me."

Bumper was very tender hearted, and the more he thought of the terrible fate of his two enemies the less he liked it. Finally, he sat upright, and said: "I must see Buster the

Bear. Maybe he can do something to help Mr. Fox and Sneaky. Anyway I must tell him."

After that he hopped along more rapidly, and long before morning he found Buster's den and knocked on the door. Buster wasn't very pleased at being roused out of his sleep in the middle of the night, and he grumbled angrily.

"What do you want, Bumper? If it isn't anything important go away, and let me finish my nap."

"It is important, Buster, or I shouldn't disturb you," was the reply.

Bumper told him the story of his adventures, which pleased Buster, who soon lost all desire for sleep. Before Bumper was through he was chuckling.

"And you say Loup, and Sneaky and Mr. Fox are in the pit now, and can't get out?" he queried.

"Yes, Buster, and I wish you could help Mr. Fox and Sneaky. They'll be eaten up by Loup in the morning."

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Buster. "I must get around early to see the circus. It will surely be worth seeing."

"But aren't you going to help Mr. Fox or

Sneaky?" asked Bumper. "That's why I called to see you."

"Help them?" grunted Buster. "What for? They'll eat you up some day if they get out."

"Perhaps they will," sighed Bumper, "but I can't bear to think of Loup killing them when they're prisoners. They ought to have a fair show."

"Yes, I suppose they should. Well," yawning and stretching, "we'll see what can be done. I'll go with you to the pit. I'll be ready in a minute."

What they saw and did in the pit early in the morning will be told in the next story.

STORY XVI

WHAT BUSTER DID TO LOUP, SNEAKY AND MR. FOX

Bumper and Buster reached the pit where Loup, Sneaky and Mr. Fox were prisoners shortly before sunrise. They had started early, but it was some distance through the woods. Buster crashed clumsily through the bushes, and then crossed the clearing to the brink of the pit. He looked down, and saw all three prisoners at the bottom looking very sad and dejected.

"Hello, Loup!" he called. "Nice place to spend the night! Had your breakfast yet?"

Loup glared back sullenly, for he knew that Buster understood his plight.

"Got good company down there, too, Loup," Buster added. "I see Sneaky and Mr. Fox in the corner. But why so gloomy? Oh, I see, you can't get out! Got caught in a trap. Well, well, that's too bad now, isn't it?"

He sat down astride a fallen tree. He enjoyed the difficulties of the three cowed and frightened animals.

"Bumper here told me how Mr. Fox frightened him and made him jump in the pit," he continued after a while, "and then how he jumped in after him. Then along came Sneaky and jumped in to eat Mr. Fox up, and I suppose you tried to get Sneaky, Loup. Well, well, that's a big joke."

"You wouldn't think so if you were down here," said Mr. Fox. "Oh, Buster, if you'll help me to get out I'll always be your friend, and do anything you ask of me."

"Huh! I couldn't trust you, Mr. Fox."

"Oh, yes, you could, Buster! I'll promise on my heart that I'll do what you ask of me."

Buster's little eyes twinkled.

"All right, Mr. Fox, I'll try you. If I get you out will you promise never to hunt the rabbits and small animals again?"

"Yes, Buster, I'll do as you ask," replied the Fox.

Buster remained quiet for a moment, and then got up and lumbered away. When he returned he was dragging the end of a long tree. "This is because Bumper pleaded for your life, Mr. Fox," he said, pushing one end of the tree in the pit. "Now come up, and make that promise again."

Mr. Fox ran up the tree rapidly, and when he reached the brink Buster stopped him. "On

your heart you promise not to hunt the rabbits and small animals any more?" the Bear asked before he would let him pass. Once more Mr. Fox crossed his heart and promised.

"Then go, and if you break your word I'll punish you."

Mr. Fox trotted away and made a break for the thick woods.

"Now, Sneaky," Buster added, "it's your turn. Do you want to make the same promise?"

Sneaky was so anxious to get out that he was ready to promise anything, and when he reached the top Buster made him repeat it. "Remember you're on parole, Sneaky," Buster cautioned, "and the first time you break your word I'll put you in a worse place than this pit."

When Sneaky had disappeared, Buster addressed the Lynx. "I don't know about trusting you Loup," he said. "I never knew a Lynx yet that could keep his word. However, I'll let you go. Give me your promise, and you can come up."

Loup promised again and again that he would let the rabbits and small animals alone. Buster accepted his word as he had that of

the others, and Loup sprang away into the woods and disappeared from sight.

"I don't know whether they'll keep their word, Bumper," Buster said when they were alone. "But at any rate they've had a big scare, and fear will keep them away for a time. I think your people will enjoy peace for a time."

"Yes, and all due to you, Buster," replied Bumper. "I've tried to make friends with all the birds and animals, but Loup, Sneaky and Mr. Fox wouldn't meet me half way."

"Some people are that way, Bumper. They're good only as long as the policeman's around. Hereafter I'll be the policeman in this woods."

Bumper nodded, for he believed that this was true.

"Then you've made friends with all the other animals?" Buster asked after a while.

"Yes, Mr. Beaver and Billy the Mink and Washer the Raccoon are my friends. And so are Gray Back the Weasel and Billy Porcupine and Sleepy the Opossum."

"How about me, Bumper?" grinned Buster when he stopped.

"Why, you've always been my friend, Buster, didn't you know it?"

"Well," growled Buster, "maybe I did and

maybe I didn't." Then smiling at the white rabbit he added: "You go home now and tell your people there's going to be peace in the woods hereafter. If you can agree among yourselves, I'll see that Loup and Sneaky and Mr. Fox don't bother you any more. If they do you just tell me."

And Buster frowned so severely, and whacked a tree with one of his huge paws so soundly, that Bumper jumped to one side, and then laughed at his own fear. Indeed, Buster was one to be feared when angry, and he could protect the small animals from their natural enemies. One blow from those huge paws would knock Loup senseless and crush in the skull of Sneaky or Mr. Fox.

"I think now," Bumper said, "I'll go home and tell my people and all the animals and birds that peace has come into the woods. There will be no more danger for them."

So his efforts to seek peace in the woods had been rewarded. Bumper the white rabbit had brought to his people something that was more to be desired than the ability to fight and protect themselves. Billy, Brownny, Mr. Beaver, Gray Back and all the other small animals were their friends, and all feuds and quarrels had been wiped out. There was to

be no more fighting. Each was to live his life without constant fear of danger.

Can you wonder that Bumper was light-hearted and full of gladness? When he met Rusty the Blackbird, he had to stop and tell him the good news, and Rusty immediately flew away to spread it among all the birds.

By the time Bumper reached home, the birds were gathered there to welcome him, and to listen to his story. Then came trooping through the woods shortly after Pink Nose, Crooked Ears, Brindley the Lamé and Rolly Polly, with all their families. It was a great gathering of rabbits and birds. And they made such a noise that Billy Porcupine hurried out of his hole to find out what it was all about, and Gray Back the Weasel and Brownny the Muskrat came, and Sleepy the Opossum, and Washer the Raccoon and Mr. Beaver and Groundy the Woodchuck. Everybody of importance seemed to be there. They talked and listened, and feasted and danced, until night time, and when they finally crept away to their burrows and nests they vowed they would never quarrel or fight among themselves again. Bumper had taught them to live in peace and happiness, and they would follow his example.

But of course they had many adventures after that—all of them—and particularly Bobby Gray Squirrel, whom Bumper had saved from the fire, and if you want to hear what great things happened to him you should read the book called

“Bobby Gray Squirrel.”

Bumper the White Rabbit

STORY I

WHERE BUMPER CAME FROM

THERE was once an old woman who had so many rabbits that she hardly knew what to do. They ate her out of house and home, and kept the cupboard so bare she often had to go to bed hungry. But none of the rabbits suffered this way. They all had their supper, and their breakfast, too, even if there wasn't a crust left in the old woman's cupboard.

There were big rabbits and little rabbits; lean ones and fat ones; comical little youngsters who played pranks upon their elders, and staid, serious old ones who never laughed or smiled the livelong day; boy rabbits and girl rabbits, mother rabbits and father rabbits, and goodness knows how many aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, cousins, second cousins and distant relatives-in-law! They all lived under one big roof in the

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WHITE TAIL THE DEER

STORY I

WHITE TAIL'S FIRST LESSON

High among the timberland of the North Woods White Tail the Deer was born, and if you had stumbled upon his home in the thickets you would have been surprised by a noise like the rushing of the wind, and then by a very remarkable silence that could almost be felt. The first was made by Mother White Tail as she deserted her young and took to quick flight.

White Tail, crouching low down in the bushes, so still that he scarcely moved a hair, would hide his beautiful head in the branches and leaves like an obedient child. Left alone he knew that his one chance of escape was not to move or whimper or cry.

That was the first lesson White Tail was taught by his mother — to keep absolutely quiet in the presence of danger. When he was so small that he could hardly hold up his head, she whispered to him: "Listen, White Tail! When I give the signal that the hunters are coming, you must flatten yourself down. The continuation of this interesting story will be found in

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WHITE TAIL'S ADVENTURES

STORY I

WHITE TAIL JUMPS STEPPING STONE BROOK

White Tail grew rapidly in size and strength, his long, clean limbs showing taut muscles and great springing power; and his neck grew thick and short, which is well for a buck, who must use it in savage thrusts when the head is a battering ram. His horns were short and bony, but they protruded in front like knobs against which it would be unpleasant to fall.

But his antlers were his pride. They spread out fan-shape on his head, crowning it with a glory that made Mother Deer supremely happy. At times it seemed as if the antlers were too heavy for the head and neck, but White Tail carried them easily, and when he shook them in sport or anger any one could see they were just fitted to him.

In time he stood as high as Father Buck, and a head taller than Mother Deer. The day the tip of his antlers reached an inch above Father Buck's, he felt a little thrill of pride. The continuation of this interesting story will be found in

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WASHER THE RACCOON

STORY ONE

WASHER'S FIRST ADVENTURE

Washer was the youngest of a family of three Raccoons, born in the woods close to the shores of Beaver Pond, and not half a mile from Rocky Falls where the water, as you know, turns into silvery spray that sparkles in the sun-shine like diamonds and rubies. And, indeed, the animals and birds of the North Woods much prefer this glittering spray and foam that rise in a steady cloud from the bottom of the falls to all the jewels and gems ever dug out of the earth! For, though each drop sparkles but a moment, and then vanishes from sight, there are a million others to follow it, and when you bathe in them they wash and scour away the dirt, and make you clean and fresh in body and soul.

Washer had his first great adventure at Rocky Falls, and it is a wonder that he ever lived to tell the tale, for the water which flows over the falls is almost as cruel and terrible as it is sparkling and inviting. But

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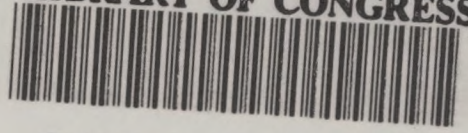
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