

Chloe and the Squirrels

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The Shadow Squirrels

Chloe went on a hike in the forest with her friends Heidi and Perry.

Polka-dot doll, Snuggles the fox, Ruffles the dog and Jingle all came along, too.

When they were tired, they settled down in a clearing. The children took their snacks out of their rucksacks and began to eat.

They talked quietly, listening to the sounds of the forest.

Birds chirped in the treetops. Rustling noises came from a nearby bush as a thrush scratched around under it. A lizard basked on a log. A bumblebee buzzed about among the flowers.

There was, however, someone who did not make any noise. A squirrel was quietly watching from the lower branch of an oak tree.

He watched the children curiously, then ran along the branch. With a leap he swung over to the next tree, then stopped and looked back.

He took an acorn in his paws and began to nibble. Watching Chloe and her friends eating must have given him an appetite.

'Come down here, squirrel!' shouted Perry, but his voice frightened the little animal, who rushed off like greased lightning deep into a clump of branches.

'He is so clever!' Chloe watched him go. 'I'd love to be able to jump from branch to branch like that.'

It was an exciting trip!

They followed the trail among the trees and bushes, over hilltops and beside streams. The sun was setting by the time they headed homewards.

'I am so tired,' said Heidi when they reached the town. 'It is much easier for squirrels. They don't have to walk along the roads.'

'If only we were squirrels!' sighed Perry.

'Look over here! The sunlight is casting the shadows of the trees and fences onto the pavement!' Chloe shouted. 'We can be squirrels too! Shadow squirrels!'

The children jumped from tree shadow to tree shadow, and teetered in a row along on the tops of the fences, just like squirrels.

Suddenly, the journey didn't seem so tiring. Before they knew it, they had reached the corner where they had to say goodbye.

Chloe started walking towards her home with Snuggles and Polka-dot the doll. 'Come on!' she said, 'Let's go home. We'll have some dinner and then go to bed!'

'You mean 'let's go to the drey,' don't you?' asked Polka-dot. 'Of course,' laughed Chloe, 'we are squirrels now.'

'Then I want to have peanuts for dinner tonight!' Snuggles chirped happily.

Chloe tells a story

Polka-dot doll and Snuggles the Fox had a big fight. Polka-dot kept taking Snuggles' toys away.

Snuggles knocked Polka-dot dolly over. 'You stinker Polka-dot!' said the fox. 'You're the stinker Snuggles!' shouted Polka-dot, with tears in her eyes.'

They got so angry that they didn't want to play together anymore. Snuggles hid behind the curtain, Polka-dot sulked in the corner.

Chloe tried in vain to get them to make up, but they turned their backs and wouldn't even look at each other.

Chloe got tired of the quarrelling, so she sat down alone on the carpet and began to read her story out loud.

'Once upon a time, there was a great oak, and in that tree lived a family of squirrels.'

'Mummy Squirrel had two babies, Squirrel Polka-dot and Squirrel Snuggles, but the two little siblings just could not get along. They didn't want to sleep in the same drey, they snatched nuts from each other's paws, and they threw pinecones at each other.'

Once, they had such a fight that they both ran away while their mother was out looking for food.

Squirrel Snuggles climbed to the top of a tall pine tree and Polka-dot went off to explore the forest.

Just then a great big crow flew by and saw Snuggles clambering to the top of the tree.

He tried to catch the little squirrel, who got such a fright that he fell down.

Although he didn't break any bones, he rolled into a deep hole and started screaming. The crow flew away.

Polka-dot heard Snuggles crying and turned back to see what had happened.

She tried to pull Snuggles out, but failed, and in a careless moment she slipped and fell into the hole with Snuggles.

A weasel had also heard the ruckus. 'Mmmm, a juicy young squirrel for dinner tonight!' she rubbed her paws in glee.

But when she bent over the pit, Snuggles picked up a stick that was there and started shouting. 'I won't let you hurt my sister!'

By this time, Mummy and Daddy Squirrel had arrived and chased the weasel away.'

'And they did pull Squirrel Snuggles out of the hole, didn't they?' asked Polka-dot dolly. 'Of course,' laughed Chloe. 'They pulled Polka-dot Squirrel out too, and the family was reunited.'

'That's alright then,' Snuggles had calmed down. 'I was a bit worried.'

'They looked out for each other,' explained Chloe. 'Because when Snuggles was in trouble Polka-dot rushed to help.'

'And when Polka-dot-squirrel was scared by the weasel, Snuggles defended her,' added Polka-dot.

'Because in the end, Squirrel Snuggles and Squirrel Polka-dot were good siblings,' added Snuggles.

Polka-dot nodded again. 'So,' asked Chloe, 'shall we go and play?'

'Yes!' cried the dolly and the fox together.