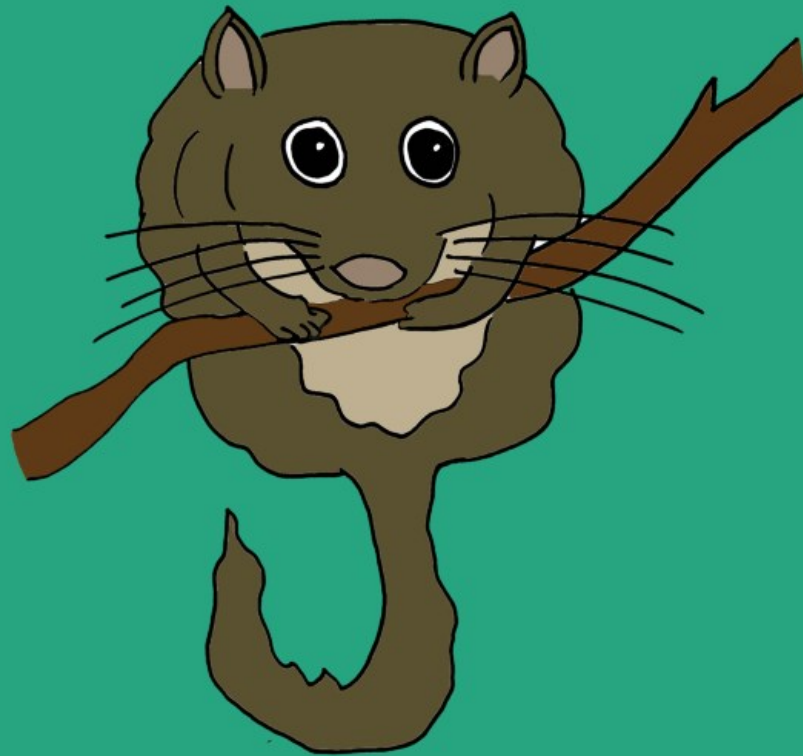


# Dormouse's Wobbly Tree

A THOUGHTBOX STORY



Dormouse was quietly snoozing in her tree-top nest, feeling all snuggly and cosy and dreaming of ripe delicious berries. All of a sudden she was shaken awake by a big thud thud thud at the bottom of her tree, and she tumbled straight out of bed!

“What just happened?” squeaked Dormouse, feeling a little dazed and peering down from the treetop in alarm. When she looked down to the ground below, all she could see was a cloud of sawdust rising up from the bottom of her tree.

She rubbed her eyes to wake them up properly, and then crawled slowly down the tree to investigate what on earth was happening.

As she neared the bottom, the tree suddenly started to wobble and to shake and the branches above her started to break. Dormouse squealed with fright and leaped to the floor just in time, as a mighty loud voice below her suddenly cried:

“TIMBER!”

and the tree toppled over, crashing heavily to the ground.

Dormouse couldn't believe her eyes. Somebody had just chopped down her home! She looked around as the dust started to clear and saw a figure nearby, hurrying over to the tree next door, where Dormouse's friend Squirrel lived.



Within a few minutes, the same flurry of sawdust could be seen rising up from the bottom of the trunk and then the tree started wobbling and shaking, just like Dormouse's tree had done moments before.

“TIMBER!” Dormouse heard again, as this time Squirrel’s tree toppled to the ground with a mighty crash! Luckily, Squirrel was an early riser and had headed off into the forest searching for nuts and so fortunately was not up in the tree when it fell.

Dormouse scurried as fast as she could down the tree, shaking the dust off her fur. She heard the rumble of an engine and then a cloud of dust in the distance as a large truck roared off through the forest, dragging several tree trunks behind it.

Dormouse stood in silence as the dust cleared...

Across the other side of the forest, Beaver was busy building a dam. Just the day before, she had found a pile of very tall, strong trees lying on the ground that somebody had cut down in the forest which would be perfect to use for building her new dam. She already had a very good dam but decided that she wanted a brand new one.

She woke up very early and stretched herself, ready for a hard day’s work. She soon set off to the log pile and after a few hours had already pulled several of the trees from the forest back home to use for her dam.



As she was busy tugging at a rather stubborn tree trunk, she suddenly heard a little voice next to her.

“Stop! Beaver, stop! What are you doing?” squeaked Dormouse, standing up on her hind legs as Beaver tugged and tugged at the fallen tree.

“I’m building a brand new dam,” said Beaver proudly. “Would you like to watch?”

“Beaver, these trees are homes to the many creatures that live in the woods, including me!” cried Dormouse, looking around in despair. “Someone from outside the forest has cut down all of our homes!”

She looked mournfully over to the tree lying on the ground that was once her home.

“Why are you building a new dam beaver, is your dam no longer working?” asked Dormouse curiously. Beaver suddenly felt rather guilty, when she realised that she had no reason to be taking these logs and building a new dam, as she already had a perfectly good dam of her own.

Beaver changed the subject and said instead, “Do you know Dormouse, I’ve never stopped to notice the creatures living high up in these trees before. Thank you for bringing them to my attention.” And she looked thoughtfully around the forest floor and treetops.



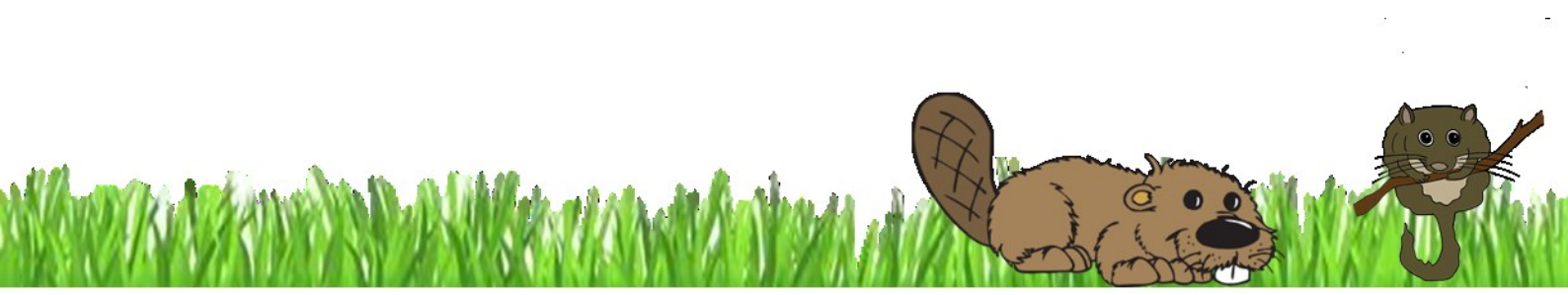
“Maybe you’ve just not been paying attention,” said Dormouse reproachfully, “just like whoever it is that has chopped down all of these trees. There have been creatures living in these trees for ever. In my tree alone there are many types of different creatures living together, some of them so small you might not even notice they are there.”

Dormouse took Beaver over to the fallen tree, where they saw a collection of spiders and ants and earwigs and many other creatures and insects disgruntledly shaking themselves off after their rather terrifying tree-tumbling experience.

“Wow,” said Beaver, standing back in amazement, “I guess I’ve never really thought before about how many creatures live in these trees that I don’t ever see. I just thought about my new dam and saw these trees just lying here, so I thought I’d drag them back home with me.”

Beaver looked mournfully around her at the piles of trees that had been chopped down.

As Beaver stood there feeling really rather glum, she decided that rather than just feeling sad and gloomy about the creatures’ lost homes, she would do something positive to help. She turned back to Dormouse, her eyes flashing with excitement.



“Dormouse, I feel really sad that someone has destroyed your home and the homes of your friends. From now on, I am going to pay attention to the natural habitats around me and whenever I build a dam, I will try not to destroy any homes of the other creatures that live here. To make up for all of the destruction today, I am going to plant three new trees in the forest to make up for each tree that has been cut down.”

And with that, Beaver whizzed off to the forest nursery where lots of little tree saplings were waiting to be planted. Before long she came trotting back to where Dormouse was standing, her arms laden with small trees.

“With my fast-digging paws, I’ll have these new trees planted in no time”, said Beaver, and before Dormouse could even blink, the air was filled with clouds of dust as Beaver dug hole after hole around the forest, popping in each of the little trees and tucking them gently into their new homes.

Dormouse filled her little watering can from the river and poured water onto each new tree, giving them good drink to help them grow tall and strong.

When they had both finished, they stood together smiling, proud of their hard work and excited for all of the new trees that would one day be towering in the forest.



“There’s one more thing I would like to do today,” said Beaver, turning to Dormouse with a big smile on her face. “I have decided that instead of dragging these logs home to build myself a brand new dam, I am going to help you and all of your friends to build a brand new house in the logs instead!”

And true to her word, Beaver worked tirelessly for the rest of the day, turning the chopped down trees that she had taken for her dam into the most magnificent log-houses for Dormouse, Squirrel and all of the creatures in the forest.

From that day forward, Beaver and Dormouse lived happily together in the forest by the river, sharing the space harmoniously together with the rest of the woodland dwellers.

THE END



