

The Tale of Brownie Beaver

CHAPTER 17: BROWNIE ESCAPES

by Arthur Scott Bailey

When the tree crashed down upon Brownie Beaver and held him fast, it was some time before he came to his senses. Then he did not know, at first, where he was nor what had happened to him. But at last he remembered that he had been cutting down a tree not far from the pond and he saw that it must have fallen upon him.

Of course, the first thing that occurred to him was to call for help. But just as he opened his mouth to shout, another thought came into his head. Perhaps some man might hear him—or a bear! And Brownie Beaver closed his mouth as quickly as he had opened it.

Then he tried to squirm from under the tree-trunk. But he couldn't move himself at all. Next he tried to push the tree away from him. But he couldn't move the tree either.


For a long while Brownie Beaver struggled, first at one impossible thing, and then at the other. And all the time the tree seemed to grow heavier and heavier.

Finally, Brownie stopped trying to get free and began to feel hungry.

You can see that he must have been worried, because there was the tree, with plenty of bark on it which he could eat. But he never noticed it for a long time.

At last, however, he happened to remember that in the beginning he had started to cut down that very tree so he could reach the bark and eat it.

Then Brownie Beaver had a good meal. And just as he finished eating, another thought came into his head. Why shouldn't he gnaw right through the tree?



Since there seemed to be no answer to that question, he began to gnaw big chips out of the wood. And in a surprisingly short time he had cut the tree apart just where it pressed upon him.

Then, of course, all he had to do was to get up and walk away.

When he reached the village he found that all his neighbors had been looking everywhere for him.

“That is,” Granddaddy Beaver explained, “we looked everywhere except near the tree where you had that adventure a few nights ago. I said you wouldn’t be there, for I advised you to keep away from that spot, as you will recall.”

Now, Brownie Beaver said nothing more. He knew that it was an unheard-of thing for one of the Beaver family to be caught by a falling tree. To have everyone know what had happened to him would be a good deal like a disgrace.

But there are plenty of people who would think they had done something quite clever if they had gnawed through a tree with their teeth—though that was something that never once entered Brownie Beaver’s head.