

The Tale of Brownie Beaver

CHAPTER 10: A HOLIDAY

by Arthur Scott Bailey



There was great rejoicing in the little village in the pond when Brownie Beaver returned with the good news that there would be no more hunting and fishing. And when old Granddaddy Beaver said that everybody ought to take a holiday to celebrate the occasion, all the villagers said it was a fine idea.


So they stopped working, for once, and began to plan the celebration. They thought that there ought to be swimming races and tree-felling contests. And Brownie Beaver said that after the holiday was over he would suggest that someone be chosen to go down and thank Farmer Green for putting the notice on the tree.

The whole village agreed to Brownie's proposal and they voted to see who should be sent. Brownie Beaver himself passed his hat around to take up the votes. And it was quickly found that every vote was for Brownie Beaver. He had even voted for himself. But no one seemed to care about that.

Then the swimming races began. There was a race under water, a race with heads out of water—and another in which each person who took part had to stay beneath the surface as long as he could.

That last race caused some trouble. A young scamp called Slippery Sam won it. And many people thought that he had swum up inside his house, where he could get air, without being seen. But no one could prove it; so he won the race, just the same.

Next came the tree-felling contest. There were six, including Brownie Beaver, that took part in it. Granddaddy Beaver had picked out six trees of exactly the same size. Each person in the contest had to try to bring his tree to the ground



first. And that caused some trouble, too, because some claimed that their trees were of harder wood than others—and more difficult to gnaw—while others complained that the bark of their trees tasted very bitter, and of course that made their task unpleasant.

Those six trees, falling one after another, made such a racket that old Mr. Crow heard the noise miles away and flew over to see what was happening.

After everybody crept out of his hiding-place some time afterward (everyone had to hide for a while, you know), there was Mr. Crow sitting upon one of the fallen trees.

“What’s going on?” he inquired. “You’re not going to cut down the whole forest, I hope.”

Then they told him about the celebration. And Mr. Crow began to laugh.


“What are you going to do next?” he asked.

“We’re a-going to send Brownie Beaver over to Pleasant Valley to thank Farmer Green for his kindness in putting an end to hunting and fishing,” said old Granddaddy Beaver. “And he’s a-going to start right away.”

Mr. Crow looked around. And there was Brownie Beaver, with a lunch-basket in his hand, all ready to begin his long journey.

“Say good-by to him then,” said Mr. Crow, “for you’ll never see him again.”

“What do you mean?” Granddaddy Beaver asked. And as for Brownie—he was so frightened that he dropped his basket right in the water.



“I mean—” said Mr. Crow—“I mean that it’s a very dangerous errand. You don’t seem to have understood that sign. In the first place, it was not Farmer Green, but his son Johnnie, who nailed it to the tree.”

“Ah!” Brownie Beaver cried. “That is why one of the words was misspelled!”

“No doubt!” Mr. Crow remarked. As a matter of fact, not being able to read he hadn’t known about the word that was spelled wrong. “In the second place,” he continued, “the sign doesn’t mean that hunting and fishing are to be stopped. It means that no one but Johnnie Green is going to hunt and fish in this neighborhood. He wants all the hunting and fishing for himself. That’s why he put up that sign. And instead of hunting and fishing being stopped, I should say that they were going to begin to be more dangerous than ever.... They tell me,” he added, “that Johnnie Green had a new gun on this birthday.”

Brownie Beaver said at once that he was not going on the errand of thanks.

“I resign,” he said, “and anyone that wants to go in my place is welcome to do so.”

But nobody cared to go. And the whole village seemed greatly disappointed, until Granddaddy Beaver made a short speech.

“We’ve all had a good holiday, anyhow,” he said. “And I should say that was something to be thankful for.”