

The Tale of Brownie Beaver

CHAPTER 16: LOOKING PLEASANT

by Arthur Scott Bailey



After Jasper Jay left Brownie Beaver, on that day when Jasper told Brownie that the photographer had made a flashlight picture of him, Brownie could hardly wait for it to grow dark. He had made up his mind that he would go back to that same tree, which was still not quite gnawed through; and he hoped that he would succeed in having his picture taken again. Like many other people, Brownie Beaver felt that he could not have too much of a good thing.

There was another reason, too, for his going back to the tree. If the light flared again and the click sounded in the bushes, Brownie intended to go right into the thicket and get his picture before anybody else could carry it away with him. (You can understand how little he understood about taking photographs.)


Well, the dark found Brownie back at the tree once more. And he began once more to gnaw at it. He tried to look pleasant, too, because he had heard that that was the way one should look when having his picture taken.

He found it rather difficult, gnawing chips out of the tree and smiling at the same time. But he was an earnest youngster and he did the best he could.

Brownie Beaver kept wishing the flashlight would go off, because—what with smiling and gnawing—his face began to ache. But no glare of light broke through the darkness.

It was not long before Brownie had gnawed away so many chips that the tree began to nod its head further and further toward the ground. And Brownie wished that the flashlight would hurry and go off before the tree fell.

But there was not even the faintest flicker of light. It was most annoying. And Brownie was so disappointed that for once he forgot to be careful when he was



cutting down a tree. He kept his eyes on the bushes all the time, instead of on the tree—as he should have done. And all the time the tree leaned more and more.

At last there was a snap! Brownie Beaver should have known what that meant. But he was so eager to have his picture taken that he mistook the snap for the click that he had first heard almost a week before.

He thought it must be the click of a camera hidden in the bushes. And he stood very still and looked extremely pleasant. Now, Brownie Beaver should have known better. But like most people, for once he made a mistake. What he really heard was the tree snapping. And before he could jump out of the way the tree came crashing down upon him and pinned him fast to the ground. He saw a flash of light, to be sure, and a good many stars. But all that only came from the knock on his head which the tree gave him.