

A Whitman TWEEN-AGE Book

In-between books for in-between readers



ANIMAL BABIES

*Wild and Free*

BOOK NO.

808

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

Moose Calf heard a great pine crash. He found himself running—not with his mother, but with a half-grown bear!

A puppy expects to find food in a dish. There was no dish in the wilderness. There was no food. And so Spud chewed on his green rubber bone. . . .

Bear Cub smelled a SMELL—a something-good-to-eat smell. Why did Bear Mother spank him and send him up a tree?

New Fawn liked to bounce all around the campground. But, oh, how quickly he turned into a spotted shadow when he saw a bear! But then, one day, New Fawn had to face a bear. . . .

The lessons animal babies must learn are hard—to “answer when spoken to,” to melt into the shadows, to move silently, to look and listen and hide and run—and to eat and not be eaten. In this exciting group of wilderness tales, small animals learn these many lessons so that they may live as Nature intended them to live—wild and free.

# ANIMAL BABIES WILD AND FREE

by GLADYS BAKER BOND

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WHITMAN PUBLISHING COMPANY • Racine, Wisconsin

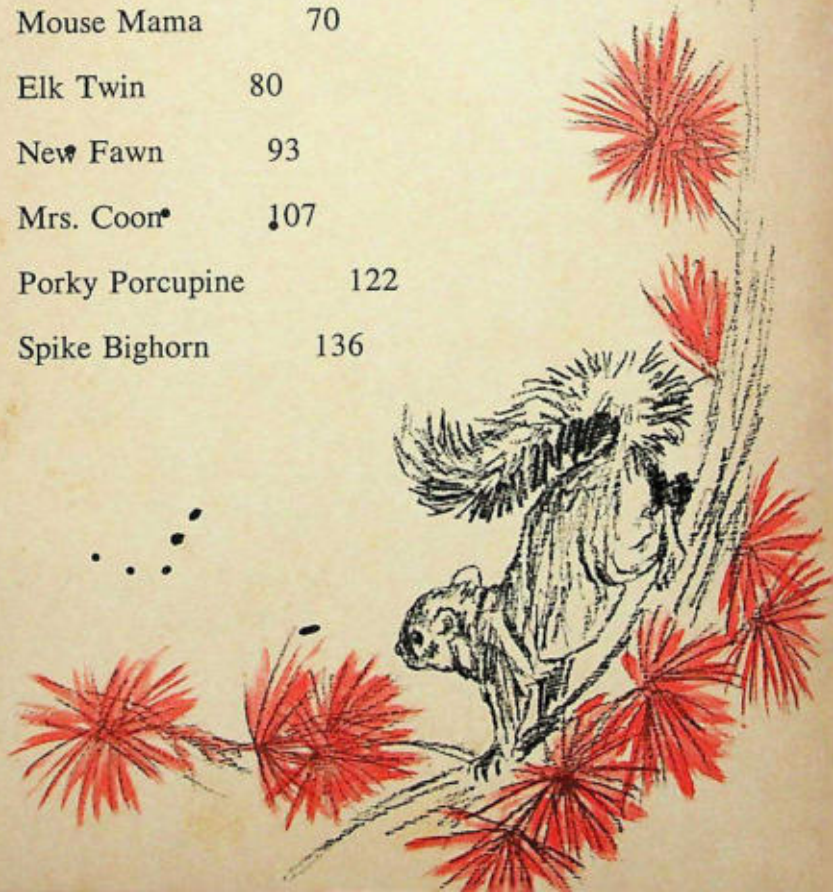
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 67-23775

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Printed in the U.S.A. by Western Printing and Lithographing Company

## CONTENTS

Moose Calf	11
Little Chief Hare	25
Bear Cub	35
Spud	48
Mouse Mama	70
Elk Twin	80
New Fawn	93
Mrs. Coon	107
Porky Porcupine	122
Spike Bighorn	136







## Moose Calf

Moose Calf's legs looked like four long white stockings stuffed full of sticks and stones. His ears were long. His hair was rough. He had almost no tail at all. He lay on a cool bed of pine needles beside a shallow northern lake.

His mother, the cow moose, fed on water lilies in the lake. While she ate she talked to Moose Calf. When she grunted and coughed she wanted an answer. Moose Calf answered. He tried to grunt and cough, too, but he just squawked.

## ANIMAL BABIES

This was Moose Calf's nap time, but he could not sleep. Something was different from other days.

Moose Calf could hear the grinding of strong teeth. He knew the beavers were pulling the bark from the trees in strips or cutting the wood into sticks they could carry.

Blue kingfishers screamed. They dived for fish. The witch-laugh of loons came from the rushes. Tree squirrels raced headfirst down a huge pine. They stopped on a bare limb to argue.

Young skunks fought over the food their mother brought.

Everything sounded just right in Moose Calf's part of the forest. But something was wrong.

What was it?

The air stung Moose Calf's nose. Something made his eyes water. While he tried to figure out what was wrong, he forgot to "speak when spoken to."

At once his mother raised her voice. She rushed out of the lake.

She weighed one thousand pounds and stood six feet tall at the shoulder. She looked like something

*Moose Calf*

put together from leftovers: a bison's hunched shoulders, a bear's shaggy coat, a mule's long nose, a rabbit's ears, a horse's legs, and a goat's whiskers.

Moose Calf thought she was beautiful. He was so glad to see her he told her so with little squawks.

The cow coughed a warning. Then her ears went forward. Moose Calf wobbled to his feet. He looked about. He was so new to the world he had not learned much about trouble. But his mother's ears pointed to danger.

Since the day of Moose Calf's birth there had been a strange blackness in the sky. Now that dark cloud began to roll and spread. It moved closer.

After a while Moose Calf heard a crackling sound. Then began a steady roar. He felt heat. He tasted smoke for the first time.

Other animals began to search for water: porcupines, skunks, a bear and her cubs, a coyote pup, a bobcat, squirrels, and chipmunks. The air was filled with the beating wings of owls, jays, waxwings, and swallows by the hundreds. Even natural enemies paid no attention to each other. Uneasily they sniffed

## ANIMAL BABIES

the air. Then they hurried down the narrow trails which were the highways of the forest.

At first the moose cow herded Moose Calf into the water. The smoke and fire came closer. She led him out of the water and bumped him along a trail with her big head.

The moose cow grunted. She coughed. She argued. She scolded. She even nipped her child's bony rump with her big yellow teeth when he tried to rest.

It became so dark Moose Calf could not tell night from day. He coughed and sneezed. Still his mother pushed him forward.

The moose cow and calf came to a sharp curve in the trail. Yellow and orange fangs of fire darted out to sting and burn their brown hair.

Each way he turned Moose Calf faced the angry fire. It burned needles and bark off pines and firs. It raced on to burn the leaf trees, shrubs, and thick wild grass.

Moose Calf heard a great pine crash. He found himself running, not with his mother but with a half-grown bear. The bear bellowed with pain. It



## ANIMAL BABIES

paid no attention to the frightened baby moose.

Larger animals ran through the fire. But Moose Calf was small enough to run under the moving fire.

He ran and ran. . . .

Finally Moose Calf could run no more. He came to a stone ledge. He could not leap over it. He was too tired to try to go around it. He just lay down. . . .

Night came. While Moose Calf lay under the ledge, it began to rain. Once in a while he lifted his head. He cried for his mother.

There was no answering grunt or cough to make him feel safe and happy. There was no warm milk to fill his empty stomach. . . .

It rained all night, and then all day. The forest fire burned itself out. Thousands of black tree trunks stood like burned matches in a sandbox. Homeless, hungry animals fought with each other. They moved on to find new homes.

Moose Calf stayed under the ledge. He was too weak and hungry to stand up, too frightened to try.

Another night passed. . . .

*Moose Calf*

Suddenly Moose Calf awakened. Something touched his head.

"This little fellow is almost a goner," a voice said.

Moose Calf had never seen a man. He did not know he had been found by a forest ranger. He did know the voice was kind and the hands gentle.

A second voice said, "We'd better leave him alone to see if the mother claims him. It's the law, you know."

The men went away. Many hours later they came back.

"He's an orphan, for sure," one man said.

The second said, "Lucky he wasn't picked up by a cat or a coyote. We'd better take him to camp."

Moose Calf felt the gentle hands lift him to his feet. He tried to stand on his thin, white legs. They folded.

"Let me carry him, Tom."

"Sure, Bill. It isn't far to the jeep. Think you can make it?"

Bill answered, "He's just a bundle of legs, ears, head, and ribs, poor little guy."





## ANIMAL BABIES

Moose Calf rode in something that grumbled and smelled like the frightening fire. Then he was lifted to earth again.

This time smaller hands touched Moose Calf. A sweeter, softer voice said, "Oh, the poor, starved baby. Let me give him a bottle."

Bill's wife tried to put something in Moose Calf's mouth. He closed his black, leathery lips. He rolled his head.

The woman coaxed, "My baby loves this formula. Honey, when you taste it you'll like it."

But Moose Calf would not drink from the bottle. The ranger said, "Let me take the nipple off and see if he'll lick my finger."

Again something touched Moose Calf's black lips. He was hungry. He smelled milk, but he did not know how to get it into his mouth.

Bill, the man who had carried Moose Calf, was wearing leather gloves. He held Moose Calf's head while Tom offered a milky finger.

Moose Calf smelled the wild odor of earth and animals on the leather. He felt the smoothness.

*Moose Calf.*

Weakly he opened his lips. He nipped Bill's gloved thumb.

"Take off your glove, Bill," the woman said. "Tom, may I use your knife, please? I have an idea."

She cut a very small hole in the thumb of the glove. Then she poked the bottle inside the glove. The thumb made a nipple. Again she offered the bottle.

"Poor, starving forest baby," she said softly. "Just try. Please?"

Moose Calf's black lips opened. The woman pushed the glove-nipple into his mouth. She tipped the bottle. Milk ran into his mouth. She told Bill, "Rub his throat so he won't choke."

Bill rubbed Moose Calf's throat. Moose Calf had to swallow. Once. Twice. Three times.

Suddenly Moose Calf knew this was milk. His tongue curved around the glove-nipple. He began to suck—weakly, but with enough strength to empty the bottle.

Each time he was fed, Moose Calf became stronger. By the seventh day he drank four quarts of milk





## ANIMAL BABIES

in twenty-four hours. But he was restless. He wanted to go home. No one talked to him. No one ordered him to "speak when he was spoken to."

Moose Calf's lonely little squawks told his new friends he was not happy.

The woman worried. She asked, "What'll we do with him?"

That day at dusk her question was answered. Out of the woods came a great brown animal. She was so thin her ribs showed. A raw, new scar stood out on one hip.

"She must have been trapped in the fire," Bill said.

"It's a miracle," Tom said. "How did that cow moose ever find her way here?"

As Moose Calf trotted to meet the cow moose, the ranger's wife said softly, "Mothers find a way."

With happy little grunts and squawks Moose Calf "spoke when he was spoken to." Those big yellow teeth did not have to nip his bony rump to send him down the forest trail.

Moose Calf went willingly.

## Little Chief Hare

On top of the great rock the golden eagles nested. Under the slide at the foot of the rock was a village of small animals. This animal was called *pika*, *whistling hare*, *cony*, *little chief hare*, *rock rabbit*, or *haymaker*. Both eagles and pikas lived above the timberline on a mountain in Idaho.

Spring came late on the peak. The mountain wore its cap of ice and snow till the middle of June. But grass grew in the bare spots by May Day.

When frost no longer snapped the stones, the

## ANIMAL BABIES

pikas peeked out to see if spring had come. Their leader was Little Chief, the noisiest, liveliest pika in the village.

Little Chief's ears were shaped like tulip petals. They stood up straight while he looked out at the sky. He twitched long eyebrows and whiskers. He blinked round black eyes.

On the skyline a herd of mountain goats walked single file. They moved slowly, enjoying the spring sun. This told Little Chief no big cat was on the prowl.

And no shadow of eagle wings touched the rock-slide!

Little Chief's whistle meant, "Safe!"

Behind Little Chief other pikas cried, "Safe! Safe! Safe!"

Soon dozens and dozens of tiny pikas ran over the rocks. After nine months underground they hopped and raced. They bleated like lambs.

Only six inches long, they looked like guinea pigs, but they had no tails. Their soft fur was just the color of the lichens that grew on the stones.



## ANIMAL BABIES

Little Chief chewed the cool, damp leaves of a buttercup. He listened to ice water drip over stones. The water fell in a thousand small waterfalls. He felt spring wind ripple his soft, fine fur.

Suddenly a shadow touched a flat stone. Danger!

Little Chief gave a cry so shrill an echo bounced. Quicker than the eye can see, the pikas hid. Little Chief moved to the edge of the hole he had found. High above the peak sailed a golden eagle. This was the ancient enemy of all pikas. Little Chief watched the eagle.

When the great bird sailed away into the north sky, Little Chief whistled again.

The pikas came out of hiding. Like children playing "Statue," they froze. Each must see for himself that the sky was empty. Then they stuffed themselves with new grass.

Each day the grass grew taller and the pikas grew bolder. They even dared to sleep in the sun. They were not much bothered by the eagle.

Then one day a second eagle appeared in the sky. This shadow was even bigger than the first. Little

*Little Chief Hare*

Chief knew the female had joined her mate.

Almost at once the eagles mended their nest of sticks and brambles. Sun shone on the red-gold tips of their dark brown feathers.

While the female eagle nested, the ice cap melted. It flowed into brooks. Night and day the fierce bird glared down on the pikas. When an eagle lifted a gopher, a hare, or even a young fawn into the sky, Little Chief felt better. That eagle was not eating pika meat.

By the dozens the female pikas brought their babies into the sunlight. At the same time eggshells were kicked out of the eagles' nest. Now the parent eagles must feed two new eaglets.

Early and late two hunters sailed the sky. Many times each day an eagle snatched a pika and carried it up to the noisy eaglets.

Little Chief shivered for the safety of his own family. "Watch me," he ordered. "Do as I do."

Now Little Chief was there, now he was gone. He popped up on another rock, looking as if he had never moved.

## ANIMAL BABIES

Little Chief taught his young ones never to move until they knew exactly where they could hide.

He showed them how to sit quietly. They looked like lumps of stone.

He taught them the pika "bleat." This was a strange, lost sound. It seemed to come from some spot far away from the pika's own throat.

• Little Chief taught his young ones well. Each day





## ANIMAL BABIES

the eagles killed other pikas. But Little Chief's family lived.

Soon the young ones were old enough to feed alone. This gave Little Chief time to hunt for the best grass on the mountain. At first light each day he raced from grass patch to grass patch. He chose his "hay fields" and checked up on them every day.

Pikas are vegetable eaters. Wild grass is their bread. Like farmers, they take care of tiny fields, then cut and dry the grass for winter's use. They do not sleep through winter. Much grass is needed.

Little Chief was a good father and a good farmer. He chose the best grass and took care of it.

When not working, Little Chief rested on a warm rock. He watched wind move the tops of pines in the valley. He saw fall's red and gold on bushes and vines. On cool evenings he saw swallows flock together. Summer was short on the peak. So was play-time. It was time to cut the hay.

The little animals cut their hay with sharp teeth. They spread the grass on flat warm stones. They dried it in the sun. Each hour of every day the pikas

*Little Chief Hgre*

ran over the rocks. They used their tiny paws as farmers use pitchforks to turn the hay.

Up on the rock the two eaglets grew feathers. They left the nest. Just as Little Chief had trained his young, so did the eagles train their eaglets. The young birds dive-bombed every unlucky or careless pika in sight.

A hundred times each day Little Chief bleated. His warning meant, "Be careful! Eagles! But work!"

At last Little Chief and all the small haymakers had dried enough food for the long winter in the den. That very day the sky filled with black clouds.

A good farmer watches the weather, and Little Chief was a good farmer. He worked so hard and fast, and bleated so shrilly, he seemed to be shouting, "Hurry! Our harvest will be ruined!"

Out of the dens and tunnels and hiding places ran the six-inch farmers. With tiny, handlike paws they bundled the dry grass. Away they ran, taking the grass to the dry dens.

Wind whipped the peak. It lifted dry grass. With nervous shrills and bleats, the pikas worked.

## ANIMAL BABIES

Eagles glared down from the big rock. They dived at the little farmers. Rain fell. Still the pikas worked.

It grew so dark the eagles no longer hunted. Still the pikas raked and bundled. They carried their hay to their dens.

Lightning flashed. Thunder clapped near the peak. The rain poured. As in spring, water ran in a thousand small waterfalls. The pikas worked under the ledges. They tried to save every blade of dry grass.

Little Chief worked hardest of all. At last he gave the order to stop work.

Into their dens crowded the pikas. They shook themselves till raindrops flew. They wiped faces. They smoothed each hair on tired, wet, small bodies.

Little Chief stood guard. He could hear the storm, but he rested.

He knew that other sunny days would come. He must rest to be ready for a second late harvest before snow fell. He had escaped the eagles. He had trained his young ones. He had saved his harvest from the storm.

Life was good.

## *Bear Cub*

Up on the pass through the mountains a sign read: MOON PASS, ELEVATION 5050. A young bear sharpened his claws on the signpost. Then he waddled into a patch of ripe huckleberries. Yellow jackets buzzed over hundreds and hundreds of acres of juicy berries. This was bear heaven, but Bear Cub was not happy.

He smelled a smell—such a teasing, come-and-get-me smell, his mouth watered! It came from the camp near the signpost. Bear Cub hurried toward

## ANIMAL BABIES

that wonderful, tempting smell.

Bear Mother caught up with him. She slapped his ears. Then she headed him into the huckleberry patch which lay downhill from the camp. Her growls told him, "There's a dog in camp. He isn't afraid of me. What do you think he'd do to *you*?"

By the time Bear Mother had fattened up for her winter's sleep, she would weigh almost three hundred pounds. Bear Cub weighed forty pounds. If Bear Mother was afraid of the dog, Bear Cub had sense enough to be afraid, too. But he could still smell that SMELL.

Bear Cub tried to turn back toward camp. Mother Bear stepped in front of him, solid as a rock pile.

Bear Cub tried to go around her. He squealed. He threw a bear-cub tantrum. It got him exactly no place. Bear Mother smacked his rump. She sent him up a pine tree to cool off.

For a few minutes Bear Cub "sassed" Bear Mother.

She paid no attention. She just kept on stuffing huckleberries into her mouth.



## ANIMAL BABIES

Bear Cub had to do something or burst. Since he knew better than to try to leave the tree, he climbed higher. To his surprise and glee he could look down into the camp.

And, oh, he could smell that smell. It rose from a frying pan on a campfire.

Bear Cub listened to the *sizz-zz-le*.

He smelled the smell.

He could almost taste that bacon. Like a human baby thumb-sucker, Bear Cub gulped and chewed air. He made begging, singing sounds. He scratched the tree till pieces of bark fell to the ground.

Big, black Bear Mother wandered far down the mountain. Bear Cub bawled. It was a sound he could make for hours at a time. He sounded so lost and lonely, Bear Mother came back up the mountain. At the foot of the tree she talked to him in low grunts and squeaks.

Eagerly Bear Cub backed down the tree trunk. Bear Mother pushed her long nose into his soft baby fur. Then she lay down on the pine needles to feed him.

*Bear Cub*

While he sucked warm milk, Bear Cub rolled his eyes. He flicked his ears to keep track of what was going on at that camp.

When Bear Cub could not drink another drop of milk, Bear Mother licked the top of his broad head. She washed his milky mouth and the backs of his ears.

A long row of ants marched across the hard, bare path. With one swish of her tongue, Bear Mother licked up at least fifty ants. Then she found the ant-hill and dug it open. When she ate she grunted happily.

Bear Cub tasted the ants. One lively ant landed in the hairs around his lips. He slapped his own face to get rid of the ant's wiggly legs.

After a while Bear Mother moved into the air current which passed through the camp. Again Bear Cub smelled that smell.

Bear Cub knew that his mother was a loving but stern parent. He did not choose to be spanked again and sent up a tree. Though he cried a little about the bacon, he did nothing to upset Bear Mother.



*Bear Cub*

He trotted at her heels while she turned over logs. He nibbled at gray-green lichens.

Bear Mother found the larvae of yellow jackets. She took a nip of the juicy inner bark of a fir tree.

She clawed up some bulbs of wild flowers.

She found the place where squirrels were storing their winter's food. She stole their pine and fir seeds. She even uncovered a nest of mice and gulped them down. It took a lot of food to keep big, black Bear Mother going. Summer was short in the high country. She must store fat for her winter's sleep.

Bear Cub knew nothing of winter. He barely remembered yesterday. He knew only the right-this-minute in time when the sun shone warmly on his back. He was curious about one leaf that twirled in the wind, a twig that snapped, and a pine snake that slid under a stump.

He sorted out the odors the wind carried. He learned where campers were picking purple huckleberries. His nose told him where the camp dog was digging out a ground squirrel.

## ANIMAL BABIES

All of this sniffing and looking and trotting, digging and wiggling and gulping made Bear Cub sleepy. He began to yawn. He yawned so many times, Bear Mother began to yawn, too. She fed more and more slowly. At last she waddled off toward the spring. Her sleepy grunt meant, "Come along."

Bear Cub obeyed.

While Bear Mother drank thirstily, Bear Cub discovered that the spring was near camp.

That good smell still clung to the things men had brought into the forest. Greedily Bear Cub tried to taste that smell. He was not hungry for milk. He was hungry for food he could chew. He took exactly four short steps toward camp. Then Bear Mother grunted. Bear Cub turned around.

Bear Mother bedded down in tall ferns. Bear Cub lay beside her. Soon she slept so soundly her muscles did not twitch.

Bear Cub did not sleep. He stood up—oh . . . so . . . quietly.

In her bed in the tall ferns Bear Mother did not waken.

*Bear Cub*

Bear Cub walked away—oh . . . so . . . quietly.  
Then he ran!

The camp was empty when Bear Cub got there. His nose told him the dog had been gone for some time. He sniffed the wooden table and benches. He sniffed the stone fireplace. He sniffed the frying pan. THERE WAS THE GOOD SMELL—but the frying pan was empty.

*Where* was that bacon?

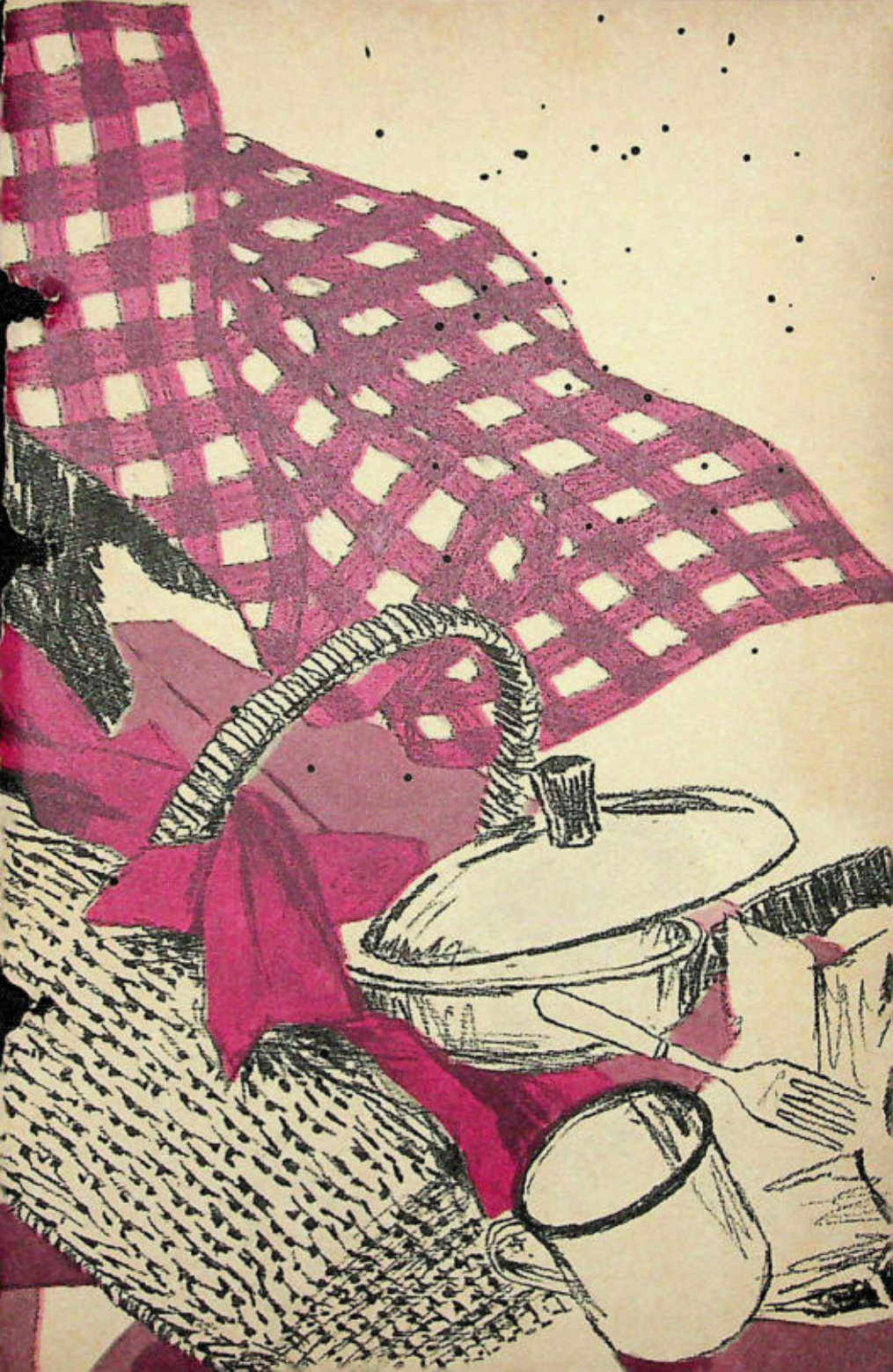
It might be in any one of a dozen places. Baskets and boxes and jars and cans and packages of food were stored on the picnic table and in the tents.

Bear Cub ripped open the baskets. He broke the boxes. He smashed the jars on stones. He threw the cans. He ripped the packages. He smelled the bacon, but he could not find it.

To comfort himself, Bear Cub lapped up spilled honey and cornflakes. He ate raisins and brown sugar and milk. While he ate, he sniffed this way and he sniffed that way.

Then he saw the bacon! It was hanging from the branch of a pine tree.





## ANIMAL BABIES

Bear Cub stood on the picnic table. He reached, but he was too short.

Then he climbed the tree. He walked out on the limb as far as he dared. Still he could not reach the bacon.

Bear Cub threw a bear-cub tantrum. He cried. He squealed. He bawled.

Everything began to happen at once. Into camp raced the dog. Right behind him ran two men and a tall boy.

Behind them ran Bear Mother! Her ears were back and she was coming fast. She did not even bother to growl. She just coughed.

A coughing bear means business. The men knew it. The tall boy knew it. And Bear Cub knew it.

He slid out of that tree so fast pieces of bark tore from the trunk. Down the trail he ran.

Bear Mother growled. Then she ran down the trail right behind Bear Cub. The dog followed at her heels.

On and on ran Bear Cub, Bear Mother, and the dog. Every few feet Bear Mother turned to growl




and slap at the dog. He managed to stay clear of her claws.

A long way from camp the dog barked a last warning. He trotted back up the trail.

Bear Mother caught up with Bear Cub. She spanked him soundly. She sent him up a pine tree. That slap meant "Stay there!" Then she lay down to finish her nap.

This time Bear Cub did not throw a bear-cub tantrum. Smoke rose into the sky. Then that good smell drifted down from camp. Bear Cub paid no attention. He was back where he belonged, and he was glad to be there.





## Spud

"Hurry, hurry, a storm is coming!" Mrs. Smith shouted. As fast as she could pick up food and dishes she packed the picnic basket.

Mr. Smith ran to the car with the water jug, blankets, and camera. He raced back to carry the heavy basket.

Bill and Sue filled their arms with toys and pillows. They ran!

Just as the great pines began to bend and bow, Mr. Smith slammed the car door. The station wagon

*Spud*

sped away from the forest camp. Left behind was a small brown and white puppy. The tag on his collar said his name was Spud. The bone he guarded was a green rubber toy.

Spud dropped his rubber bone. He ran down the road. His long ears flapped. His puppy tail wagged happily. Spud was used to lively games. As long as he could see the car, he played a kind of tag game. But he could not tag those people he loved no matter how hard he ran.

When Spud could no longer see the car, he sat in the road. He looked east, west, north, and south. Any minute now he knew that car would come back. He was ready to run to meet it.

But the car did not come back.

Spud was alone in high country.

Wind dumped black clouds of dust picked up in the wheatland which lay west and north of this high forest.

Spud whimpered. He scrubbed his eyes and nose. Then he lay down in the dry grass. He put his head on his paws.





Each time a tree groaned and squeaked as it bent in the strong wind, Spud jerked up his head. He twitched his ears. He was used to the street sounds of motors and tires. There was no street.

Then the first rain spattered. The drops were big and dirty. Spud sat up. His back humped and his ears dragged into the weeds. He cried. But no one opened a door. There was no door to open.

Down came the rain, harder and harder. Water cut little rivers in the pine needles.

Spud sat close to a big pine. The branches were high above him. There was not much protection for a puppy on the ground.

Lightning flashed. Thunder boomed out of the dark, rolling clouds.

Spud cried. He barked. He had never been out of doors in a storm. He wanted his basket with its soft folded blanket.

After a while Spud wanted something else almost as much as he wanted his basket. He wanted food.

The storm turned into a steady rain. Head down, tail drooping, Spud trotted back to the table. This

## ANIMAL BABIES

was where he had last had something to eat.

He found a sandwich under the table. He ate it. Then he gnawed on his green rubber bone for a while. And then he went to sleep in a clump of grass under the table.

Spud was used to the sounds made by doors, dishes, water taps, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, television, radio, cars, and toys. He was used to petting hands and friendly voices. But after the storm was over, Spud heard strange sounds which raised the hair on his back.

He heard cat screams, coyote barks, porcupine chatters, deer snorts, and bear grumbles. He heard owl hoots and nighthawk shrieks. Squeals, swishes, rustlings, and wild, musky odors worried him. Nothing was familiar. Everything was to be feared.

At last morning came. Spud waited for loving hands to give him food, to wipe and comb his dirty fur. Nothing happened. Hungry and lonely, he smelled food in the trash can by the table. He was too small to reach the food scraps. Spud chewed grass while his hair dried in the wind. When a stick

*Spud*

snapped, he looked hopefully toward the road.

Finally Spud picked up his rubber toy and started down the road. He was not very old. He soon curled up in the sun to sleep. He awoke when a car passed. He knew the sound of the motor and yelped with joy.

Spud raced back toward camp. Along the way he met several animals prowling for food after the storm. Spud knew about kittens, goldfish, canaries, and people. He did not know about these spiny porcupines, striped skunks, and hungry-looking coyotes. Spud hid.

The car passed the spot where Spud hid. The car had disappeared before the storm. It disappeared again.

Spud did not know what to do, but he was so hungry he had to do something. He sniffed and pawed pine needles with the idea that he might find food. A housebroken puppy expects to find food in a dish. There was no dish.

For three days Spud wandered, hungry and dirty. He ate grass and a few insects. Hungrily he looked



*Spud*

at the meadow mice and birds. He had no idea how to catch them. A wild baby is taught how to hunt. Spud had been taught to love and be loved.

Each day Spud came back to the park. Each time his owners hunted for him, Spud was in some hidden spot, too weak from hunger to make much noise. After the storm, visitors stayed away from the forest. It was September, too late for picnics, too early for hunters.

On his fifth day in the high country, Spud lay down between two fallen logs. The light grew evening dim. Spud heard the sounds which told him other animals were feeding. He cried and gulped air, but he was too weak to stand up.

Suddenly great wings swished out of the sky. Sharp claws stretched wide. A strong beak opened.

Just as Spud saw his danger, a large gray animal leaped to meet the bird. There was a short, fierce battle. Then the owl flew to the top of a pine. Broken feathers fell.

The animal which stood over Spud was a timber wolf. Spud could not know this. But he did sense



## ANIMAL BABIES

something familiar about this animal which is a dog's true brother. Spud tried to stand. He fell back in terror. Slanted yellow eyes glowed hungrily. Fangs bared in a snarl. Long, narrow jaws opened.

Those jaws closed without killing Spud. This wolf was very old, the grandmother of her pack. She had not given birth to pups for a long time—but some dim memory stirred. Quietly she sat on the log and looked at Spud. She examined him with her nose. She smelled his hunger and helplessness. Then she went away.

In a few minutes she came back. She dropped a limp mouse beside Spud's nose.

Spud sensed that this strange food was meant for him. He ate. As the night passed, the old wolf brought scraps of food to Spud. She seemed to know he must not overeat after near starvation. When she had finished her own feeding, she lay beside Spud.

Toward morning a hungry cat found Spud's hiding place. The old she-wolf's howl brought a pack of gray wolves out of the night. The cat did not attack.

*Spud*

After the cat went away, Spud found himself in great danger. The wolves had protected him because of the she-wolf's call for help. Now some of the younger wolves decided Spud must be a meal captured by the she-wolf. They leaped forward, ready for the kill.

They were met by the old she-wolf. Fiercely she stood guard, ready to give her life to protect Spud. Some unspoken message was understood by the wolf pack. One by one they came to the spot where Spud lay. They looked at him. They studied him with their noses. Then they stepped back.

The wolf pack adopted Spud.

In the first light of Spud's sixth day in the forest, he was carried back to the pack's den. He had lost much weight, but the she-wolf was old. It was not an easy journey. In his own jaws Spud carried his green rubber bone.

Few true wolves remain in Idaho. Ranches, cities, lumber mills and mines, railroads and highways have pushed the wolf packs deep into the forests where they can still find food. Spud's new





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## ANIMAL BABIES

home was a large, dry cave in a great tumble of boulders. Each rock was as big as a truck.

At first Spud just ate and slept. The she-wolf stayed with him. Food was brought by her mate, a thin, strong wolf so old his hair looked rusted.

As Spud grew strong again, he played with the wolf pups. When he was happy, he barked. This sound startled the silent wolves. Even the pups watched him with unwinking, slanted yellow eyes. When he grew too noisy, Spud was punished by the she-wolf. Often he heard the choking, barking cry of the coyote. A lonely, echoing howl was the only sound the wolves made. Soon Spud learned to be silent.

Spud was put in the training class with the wolf pups. He learned to hunt. With the she-wolf he chased a rabbit. They ran in wide circles. The she-wolf rested while Spud ran. Spud rested while his new mother ran. Spud snapped the rabbit's spine and carried the meat to the she-wolf. She licked Spud's face. They shared the meat.

But after killing the rabbit, Spud dug up his green

*Spud*

rubber bone. While he chewed, he remembered sights and sounds not seen and heard in the forest.

As Spud grew, his collar became too tight. When he clawed at it, the she-wolf chewed the strap until it broke. Spud left the collar where it fell. But he fought fierce battles with the pups who tried to steal his toy bone.

But for his color and long ears, Spud came to look like a wolf. The wild meat he ate, the running, and the fighting turned him from a cuddly house pet into a lean, strong-legged wild animal. With the pack he hunted with much skill. He learned to kill deer.

In winter game was scarce. Spud ate what he could find. With the pack, he killed cattle and sheep down in the ranch country. He learned to steal bait from traps by taking the meat from below the jaws of the trap. With the other wolves he learned to pull up the fishing lines men set in holes in ice. Spud ate the fish which dangled there.

He learned and obeyed pack laws. No more than thirty animals, all of them related and friendly,





## ANIMAL BABIES

hunted together. Each wolf had a special job and did it very well. Never did they kill without reason. They killed for food.

As the months passed, Spud became as cunning as a wolf. In one way he puzzled the wolves as much as they puzzled him. In hunting camps, on roads, on ranches, or wherever man left the human odor, the wolves were afraid. Spud was not.

By the time summer came again, the she-wolf was too old to hunt. Her mate lost his place in the pack. Spud killed and carried food to her. Since a wolf feeds on anything from a mouse to a moose, Spud found lots of food. The forest was full of young animals.

Spud did not need to raid the trash cans in the forest camp. But every few days he made the trip from the cave to the camp. Fearlessly he tore open food boxes. He grabbed toys from children. He went into tents.

Spud was not afraid of people, but they were afraid of him. They threw rocks or hit him with sticks. Spud forgot all of his wolf training when this

*Spud*

happened. He snarled and barked. Word went out that a wild dog was a danger in that camp.

Even though driven away, Spud always went back to the camp. One angry camper baited a loaded gun, hoping to do away with the wild dog.

Wolves understand traps and baits. Spud had been well trained. He bit off the cord close to the gun's trigger. He ate the bait. Then he walked back into the center of the camp.

As silent as a wolf, he stopped at each stone fireplace. He sniffed tent flaps. He walked around tables. Just outside the circle of firelight in a camping area, he sat to watch a group of people. His nose sorted out odors which made him whine.

Bill Smith turned from the table to ask, "What was that?"

His sister answered, "It's a dog. He's been watching us for a long time. He's spotted and has long ears just like—"

"Spud!" Bill yelled.

Spud had forgotten his name. The shout startled him. With a wolf's skill, he faded into the dark. But

## ANIMAL BABIES

Bill followed him with a flashlight.

"Come back here, son," Mr. Smith called. "That may be the wild dog we were warned about."

"It's Spud. I know it is. This is where we lost him."

Spud had been moving away. When Bill's hand touched his back, he snapped. He left tooth marks, but he did not break the skin of that reaching hand. Some memory left from puppyhood kept him from hurting Bill.

"Where's his collar?" Sue asked eagerly.

"He'd have lost it by this time," Mr. Smith said. He joined Bill and Sue. They watched Spud who stood in the dim light between the firelight and the night. "You could be right," he said. "This might be Spud. Let's see if he will take food."

Bill brought a hamburger from the table. Spud eyed it hungrily. He did not take it from Bill's hand. Bill put down the meat. When Bill was not looking, the meat disappeared and so did Spud.

Each day Spud went back to the camp, and each day the children gave him food. On the last day



## ANIMAL BABIES

of the family's stay in the high country, Bill dropped a leash around Spud's neck while he ate. Spud snarled and snapped at the leash, but Bill held fast.

"Now we can take Spud back home where he belongs," said Bill.

"I don't know—" Mr. Smith said. "He's lived in the forest for a whole year. He might be dangerous."

"Let me tame him," Bill begged. "He used to like me. He will again."

"Okay," Mr. Smith agreed. "If he'll let you put him in the car, we'll take him home."

When the car was loaded, Bill coaxed and pulled Spud into the backseat.

Spud shivered and pawed at the door when it shut. When the motor started, he went wild. He leaped. He snarled. He bit his leash. Then Spud howled.

The sound was so wild and wolflike, Mr. Smith stopped the car. He jerked open the back door.

"Please, Dad, you promised!" Bill begged.

"Take off the leash and let him make up his own mind," Mr. Smith said.

With tears running down his cheeks, Bill obeyed.

*Spud*

Spud leaped away into the tall grass. He ran as a wolf runs, stretched long, with head hanging low and tongue dangling.

"He'll come back," Bill said. "Let's wait for him."

"Well, okay," Mr. Smith said.

The family waited.

About an hour later, Spud went back to the camp. Closer and closer to the car he crept. He wagged his long, bushy tail. Then he sat, silent and watchful.

Back in the woods, the wolves called.

Spud answered. For a long moment he walked a nervous circle. Then he dropped something and ran.

Bill picked up Spud's green rubber bone.

"I'm sorry, son," Mr. Smith said. "Spud won't be back. He has kept this toy for a year, and he's giving it to you. This is his way of telling you he's sorry."

Wild and free as his brothers, the wolves, Spud disappeared into the forests of the high country. This was his home.

## Mouse Mama

*Screech—clang—clunk!*

"Eeee!" Mouse Mama squeaked. She ran up a tall weed stem. She hung there like an acrobat. She twitched her ears and sniffed the air.

What *was* that sound? Thunder? Surely not, for the sky above the hillside was blue. What caused that smoky odor? There had been no storm. Lightning had not struck a dead tree.

Mouse Mama was too tiny to see the bulldozer climb the hill. The blade of the bulldozer was cutting a sled run for the children in the neighborhood.

*Mouse Mama*

Mouse Mama did not know this. She knew only that she must hurry-hurry-hurry and scurry-scurry-scurry. In her nest lay five naked babies, and they were hungry.

Eight days ago the five babies put together had weighed no more than half a teaspoonful of butter. Now their eyes were open. They were cutting their first teeth. Just to stay alive a mouse must eat the equal of its weight in food every day of its life. The babies could not feed themselves. That was Mouse Mama's job.

Mouse Mama had no time to waste in being scared. She swung from the weed stem to a bunch of dry grass. To keep up her strength, she filled her mouth with grass seeds.

She chewed as she ran. As usual, she must feed her babies, then eat her lunch, then feed her babies, then eat a snack, then feed her babies, then eat—oh, my!

Mouse Mama's nest was hidden in a knothole in a fallen log at the foot of the hill. Down the smooth path she ran. Hurry, hurry, scurry!





## ANIMAL BABIES

When she squeaked the sound meant, "I'm coming, I'm coming!" That big noise was now such a roar it made Mouse Mama dizzy.

Just as Mouse Mama reached her woven grass nest in the knothole, WHOOSH! The ground lifted. It tumbled. Suddenly grass roots stuck up in the air like the branches of tiny trees. The fallen log jumped into the air. It stood on end as if it had begun to grow again. Then it fell, nest and all.

Mouse Mama squeaked. She skittered and she scuttled as the ground under her feet humped higher and higher, like a mountain that is growing.

All around her was that sound: *screech-clang, clunk!* Lumps of damp earth rolled in strange ways.

Along with three black beetles, she ran. She hunted for the one piece of earth which might feel solid under her feet.

Suddenly the earth no longer shook. The sound did not stop, but it seemed to move away.

There was much dust in the air. Mouse Mama could not see the sky. She could not find the path. She could not find her nest.

*Mouse Mama*

Mouse Mama knew she must find her babies soon or they would starve.

Over the grass roots, rocks, dirt, and broken wood she ran.

Through wild strawberry plants, under leaves of dandelion she ran. Around a fallen pine cone and over a pile of red and yellow leaves she ran.

Back and forth, up and down, around and around she ran.

Where, oh, where was her nest?

Mouse Mama's world was strangely changed. She found the big flat stone where she sipped dew in the early morning. The stone had rolled against the roots of a giant pine tree. The mole's tunnel was supposed to be under the rock.

Why was Mr. Mole himself outside his tunnel in daylight?

His old tunnel had been across the path from Mouse Mama's home in the log. Now there was no path. He began to dig a new tunnel.

Mouse Mama wiggled her whiskers. She moved her ears. She hurried and scurried. She scampered

## ANIMAL BABIES

and skittered. Her tiny heart pounded with fright.

She was growing hungrier by the minute. She had missed at least three snack times. But she dared not stop to eat, even when she found an apple core. She must feed her hungry babies.

Mouse Mama found herself in the garden at the foot of the hill. She did not belong here. Here lived a great, furry cat with long claws, a thumping tail, and two shiny green eyes. More than once Mouse Mama had met the cat at night when he was on the prowl. Then she had been able to hide. Now it was daylight!

Mouse Mama listened. Then she heard it. *Pad. Pad. Pad.* Where was that cat?

Mouse Mama peeped around the dry, rattling stem of a bean plant. The cat pounced. She RAN!

She hid, but she knew she had been seen. The cat pat-patted the dry leaves. He barely missed Mouse Mama's three-inch body.

Mouse Mama shivered. But she listened to the rhythm of those pats, like a marcher getting in step in a parade. At just exactly the right second, when



## ANIMAL BABIES.

the cat's paw was neither up nor down, Mouse Mama darted.

But this time she ran up against a cement wall. Lightning-swift, she turned. She stood on her hind feet. She bared her teeth at the surprised cat. The cat flattened. He quivered. He sprang.

• Mouse Mama had one chance to escape. She took it. She ran straight toward the surprised cat, and not away as he had expected. The cat touched Mouse Mama's long, bare tail. But before a claw could dig in, Mouse Mama RAN.

She went straight up a hollyhock stalk the cat could not climb. Up there above the cat's head, she leaped, and swung, and climbed, and skittered, like an acrobat in a circus.

Mouse Mama reached the fence. She ran along the top board. She found a stick which leaned against a post. Down the stick she ran. She ran into the dried grasses and weeds at the foot of the hill.

Safe!

By this time Mouse Mama was so hungry she simply had to snatch a few grass seeds. She was so

tired her small legs trembled. Then she saw a log.

She touched it. It felt like her log.

Then she sniffed. It smelled like her log.

She ran up its round side. She hurried over the broken bark. And there it was—HER KNOTHOLE!

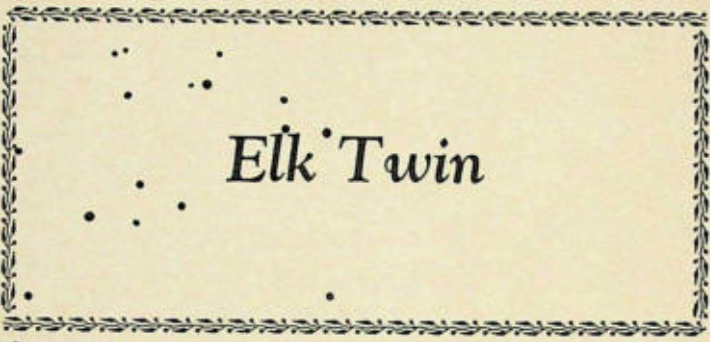
"Babies, I'm home," Mouse Mama said gladly.

While she fed her small, bare babies, Mouse Mama rested. She looked around at her nest. Over and under, in and out, she had woven the grass. No loose ends stuck out. She had used coarse grass on the outside. The inside was lined with bits of the softest, cleanest grass she could find.

The nest was stormproof. It had one round little hole for a door. This she closed each time she left the nest. Not even a bulldozer-earthquake had broken the grass nest.

Outside the knothole the air was filled with dust and strange sounds. But *inside* the knothole in the fallen log Mouse Mama washed her babies' faces.

When she was sure her babies were safe, Mouse Mama would eat that apple core she had found. Mouse Mama was hungry!



## Elk Twin

It was late fall in Idaho, hunting season in the forests.

When the first gun sounded, the elk herd moved up and over the mountain like autumn leaves pushed by a strong wind. The elk twins ran with their mother.

When she fell, one of the young elks stayed with her. He pawed at the ground. He tiptoed forward. He nosed her body. He leaped aside in terror when she did not rise.

*Elk Twin*

Twin, the second young one, stopped just long enough to see what had happened. Over on the ridge, smoke puffed. The smoke was followed at once by those sharp sounds which brought death.

*Bang! Boom! Bang!*

Twin saw a great buck reach the top of the mountain. For a moment the lord of the forest looked like a scrap of bark blown against the cold, clear sky. Then he dropped to his front knees. He did not rise.

*Bang! Bang! Bang!*

Would the sounds never stop? Twin's enemies seemed to be all around him.

He could not stay. But where could he go?

The elk, second largest of the whole deer family, is a wise animal. Twin was young, but he had the will to live. He had the wits to protect himself from an enemy he could see. He could see a man. The man stood in the shadow of a very large stone.

Twin knew nothing of guns. But Twin saw sunlight flash from the barrel of a gun. It was that long stick that caused death with a loud bang.



Elk Twin

The elk's coloring is yellowish-brown. On the mountain, bushes and grasses were brown, red, and yellow. The aspen trees glowed like gold. The tamarack's needles had turned rust-colored.

Very slowly Twin moved from bush to bush. At last he reached a grove of aspens. Then he stopped. His own color became a part of the golden leaves, the shadowed trunks, and the tall, dry grass.

Twin stayed all day. Deerflies stung. He dared not flip his tail. He had seen more men and more guns.

Once some jays came into the aspen grove. They made much noise because he was there. Twin moved uneasily. Then he heard a *bang*. He saw smoke. A bullet whistled so close it cut leaves from the aspens. Twin did not run. There was no second shot.

Toward evening it began to snow. In the dim light Twin moved down the mountain. At the spot where he had last seen his mother and twin, he saw a great splotch on the ground. He smelled death.

Twin made a grunting, crying sound. He turned

ANIMAL BABIES

away. He had never spent a night alone. But now it was night.

And he was alone.

In summer, elk feed in the high country. The first snow drives them down into the valleys. They follow the same trails, year after year. Now the hunters had scattered the herd. The elk were not on the trails.

Twin had never made the trip to the valley. His nose and sharp eyes told him where other elk had been. They did not tell him where the elk herd was going.

Twin was on his own. Snow crunched under his hooves. Ice froze around his nostrils, lips, and eyes. But he went up the mountain again. Up—and over.

It snowed for three days and nights. During the storm Twin moved on and on. Several times he found himself in the camps of hunters. He saw the campfires which melted holes in the snow. He went around the tents fastened down for the night with snowshoes. Twin made a wide circle when he saw or smelled man.

*Elk Twin*

Often while he fed, otters played in the snow. They left a crisscross of tracks.

Canada geese dropped down to rest and feed. They rose again to point a great, live arrow through the snow clouds.

Twin's huge cousins, the moose, passed nearby. At this time of the year they fed on the tips of willows.

Day and night Twin listened for the elk's call. It is really a whistle, but sounds like a bugle. It starts low, then rises wild and free, to end with several grunts. Often he heard the bugle in the distance. At last he heard it nearby. Gladly Twin waded through the deep snow. He was sure he would be able to find his herd.

Suddenly Twin found himself on the edge of an icy cliff. Snowbanks rose like white walls on three sides. Panting, he stood there, trying to figure the way out of the snow trap.

A great golden eagle swooped down. It struck Twin's head with huge wings. Talons as sharp as knives cut his back.

## ANIMAL BABIES

If Twin got excited, he would fall to the rocks below the cliff. Common sense told him the eagle wanted this to happen.

Instead, Twin rose on his hind legs. With his back to the snow wall, he fought with his forefeet. Again and again the eagle dived. Twin's hooves were sharp. His muscles were powerful. The eagle gave up and rose into the cold sky.

Tiredly Twin licked his wounds. He heard the elk bugle again. Then he heard that familiar sound. *Bang! Bang! Bang!*

Twin did not try again to find the herd. He just worked to stay alive.

On Christmas Eve Twin found his way to a ranch. He joined a herd of cattle feeding around a haystack. By this time Twin was so hungry and thin he did not run from the smell of man.

A man and two boys stopped a pickup truck to look at the herd. The man said, "The herd is wintering well."

"Most of them," a boy agreed. "There's a skinny one."



## ANIMAL BABIES

"That's an elk!" his brother said. "Do you suppose Santa lost part of his team?"

The man and boys laughed. They moved on.

Twin had no idea what had been said, but he did not smell danger. He did not hear guns. He stayed with the cattle. They accepted him. Twin chewed a cud to digest the hay, just as they did.

Time passed. Twin's legs grew longer. He gained weight. He tried to play with the cows, for he was still an animal child. But the cows would not play. They were winter lazy.

One day the rancher's oldest son offered Twin an apple. Twin was afraid to take it from the boy's hand. The boy left the apple in the snow and drove away in the pickup. Then Twin ate the fruit.

The next time the boy came, Twin took the apple from the boy's fingers. By spring he followed the boy, his friend. He pushed his nose into the boy's pockets to find his apple.

A warm Chinook wind moved in from the Pacific. Almost overnight the snow melted. Grass began to grow in the valleys and in the high country. The

*Elk Twin*

rancher drove his cattle herd back into the hills. Twin went with them.

On the summer range, Twin heard no elk bugle. He was lonely for the boy who had been his winter playmate. He went back to the valley.

He heard no boys' voices at the ranch. He did not know the children were still in school.

Twin leaped fences and found himself in an orchard. He ate the leaves from young cherry trees and listened for the boy.

In a garden he ate a whole row of tomato plants. These tasted so good that he tried the cabbage plants. He wandered, lonely but well fed.

Wanting something he did not have, Twin visited other ranches. At each stop he cleaned out the garden.

At a school on a highway, Twin saw children playing. One of them was his friend, the rancher's son.

"Hey, fellow!" the boy shouted. "How did you get here?"

Twin was used to the smell of gasoline, oil, and



*Elk Twin*

rubber. He crossed the highway. When he met the boy he pushed his nose into his friend's pockets, hunting for an apple. Excited children fed him sandwiches and cookies.

Twin had such a good time, he went to school every day. He played tag. He ran races. Sometimes he played too roughly. When excited he struck with his sharp hooves, or bunted with his bony head.

One day he gave black eyes to three boys. The teacher scolded, "That elk has to go! This is a school, not a zoo. I'm going to call the Fish and Game Department!"

The next day Twin visited the school again. A horse trailer sat in the schoolyard. The boy who was Twin's friend led him up the ramp and into the trailer. He gave Twin an apple and scratched his ears.

"Good-bye, pal," the boy said softly. "The next time I see you, you will be as tall as a horse and you'll weigh a thousand pounds. Be careful back there in the forest!"

While Twin ate his apple the trailer door closed.

ANIMAL BABIES

Twin did not like the noise and movement of the truck which pulled the trailer, but it did not scare him too much. He had grown used to the ranch pickup and the highway.

After a long ride the truck stopped. The ramp was put in place. Twin was set free at a forest ranger's station.

For a while he stayed close to the road. Then he grew restless. He moved off into the forest.

Several hours later Twin found himself in an upland meadow. It was bright with wild flowers and deep with wild hay. The grass was cut into a giant checkerboard by fresh elk trails.

Memory stirred.

Twin sniffed the air. He grunted and snorted with excitement. Then he began to trot. He had come home.

## New Fawn

New Fawn was born in May in a campground in one of Idaho's national forests. Mother Deer licked every hair on his small body. She even licked his tiny hooves. In his nest of tall, clean grass, New Fawn felt loved and safe.

Leaf shadows made dots and spots on the ground. New Fawn's bright coat was spotted, too.

A golden eagle swooped down. It picked up a field mouse. It did not see New Fawn. He looked like the dots and spots on the ground.

## ANIMAL BABIES

Mother Deer stayed nearby to watch for danger. Sometimes New Fawn heard the little *snick-click* of sound she made. He knew when she pulled twigs, leaves, and grasses into her mouth. He liked the smell of the grass. But when he was hungry, New Fawn wanted milk.

Each half hour Mother Deer came back to New Fawn. Sometimes he wanted to feed longer than the two minutes she allowed. But Mother Deer said, "No." She licked his face with her long tongue. New Fawn curled in a ball to sleep. Soon New Fawn grew strong enough to stand on his wobbly, thin legs. When Mother Deer knew it was safe, he bounced all over the campground. He wanted to see what his world was like.

He saw the beaver kits slide down the bank. He heard them splash when they hit the water. They were young and playful. They would not harm him.

He saw the coyote pad across the campground. It kept its nose to the ground. Its ears flicked. Its eyes were watchful. The coyote was an enemy. New Fawn had no body odor. The coyote could not smell him

*New Fawn*

while New Fawn was so young, New Fawn still wore his spots. The coyote did not see New Fawn.

Red-winged blackbirds worked on nests along the river. Kingfishers dived for fish. The birds were cheerful neighbors. New Fawn watched them.

But, oh, how quickly New Fawn turned into a spotted shadow when he saw a bear!

New Fawn saw this same bear every day. Each time he shook with fear.

The bear was keeping track of a woodchuck den under a pile of stones. Mother Woodchuck pushed those fat babies back into the den the minute she smelled the bear.

The bear tore up a log. It ate the larvae of wasps



• ANIMAL BABIES

which nested there. Then it stole pine seeds from a squirrel. Finally it went down to the river to fish.

Until New Fawn learned to leap and run, the bear was his enemy. He was glad when the bear left the campground.

One day a great red monster roared by New Fawn's nest in the grass. It kicked pebbles out of the ruts in the road. In its trail it left a bad-smelling blue cloud.

New Fawn wanted to bleat. But he had learned his lesson well. He did not make a sound. He just shook and shivered.

As quiet as a moth, Mother Deer came back to New Fawn. She touched him with her black nose. Then she licked his shaking sides with a loving tongue.

Was the red monster a friend or an enemy? Mother stood so still, New Fawn thought it must be an enemy. Yet Mother Deer did not flatten down the white flag of her tail. She did this when she could not run from danger.

The red monster came back. It stopped. People

*New Fawn*

climbed out. New Fawn saw that this did not alarm Mother Deer. Neither did it please her. She just watched.

New Fawn was curious. He sensed that these were beings not usually found in the forest. But here they were, and New Fawn wanted to know more about them.

He stood up on wobbly legs. He peeped through the leafy bushes. He saw that some of the people were taller than the bear. Some were very small. Some had big voices. Some were quiet. Some moved slowly. Others ran.

In his short life New Fawn had watched the animals who lived in the campground. He knew nest-building when he saw it. With big, bright eyes he watched a man set up a tent. Then a woman made a soft bed in the tent. She put the baby to bed. New Fawn liked the happy sounds coming from the tent.

At last the woman tiptoed quietly away from the baby. She went down to the river. The man carried things from the red truck. Once in a while the man





• ANIMAL BABIES

looked into the tent to check on the baby.

After a while New Fawn could not see the man. New Fawn could hear him whistling, someplace near the truck. He could hear the woman and older children, too. He knew they were on the riverbank.

While New Fawn watched the people, Mother Deer slipped away to feed in some far part of the campground. New Fawn was not hungry, so he knew she would be gone for quite a while. At the same time, he knew that a squeal of fright from him would bring her back on the run. She was never too far away to hear him, nor did she ever skip a feeding time.

Knowing these things about his mother made New Fawn feel safe. Safe—but curious! That baby in the tent was now part of New Fawn's world. New Fawn wanted to see him.

New Fawn peeped through the bushes again. He sniffed. He did not smell danger. With a happy bounce, he left his hiding place in the buckbrush. He walked to the tent. Once more he listened and sniffed. He smelled the baby smell of warm milk.

*New Fawn*

He stepped closer. Step. Step. Step.

New Fawn put his head in the tent, his right front foot. His left hind foot came forward, his left front foot, his small spotted body. New Fawn found himself inside a small, warm cave.

Just for a moment he shook with fear. Then he pushed his nose against the baby's blanket. He smelled the milk. He listened to the soft breathing.

New Fawn was a baby, too. In the warm, dim light he began to nod. He dropped to his knobby knees. He curled up to sleep. Any forest baby listens while he sleeps. New Fawn knew he would hear the baby's mother when she came up the path.

And he did.

New Fawn was back in his own leafy hiding place when the woman went in the tent. He did not understand the words, but he knew she was puzzled. She called to the man, "Did you move the baby, dear?"

"No. Anything wrong?"

"Not really. But there's a round little nest in the blankets."





## ANIMAL BABIES

In the days that followed, New Fawn watched the baby. The baby toddled around the campground. New Fawn stood just beyond the baby's fat, waving hands. He stayed out of sight among the dots and spots of the leaf shadows.

That is how New Fawn happened to be so near the baby when the bear waddled into camp.

At that moment the parents and older children were sitting at the picnic table. The baby was on the ground. He waved his arms while he toddled. He giggled.

New Fawn both smelled and heard the bear. He knew the bear was angry. Grumbling, muttering sounds came from the place where the garbage cans were kept. Swinging its heavy head, the bear walked toward the picnic table.

The baby was in the bear's path to the food on the table. The bear raised one great, clawed paw.

Just as close to the bear was the fawn.

Danger had come close, but never quite so close in all of New Fawn's short life. He squeaked and bleated. He shot out of the buckbrush. He bumped

into the fat baby. The baby rolled.

Down came the bear's paw. The bear missed both baby and fawn by a small part of an inch.

The woman screamed. She snatched up the baby. The man grabbed an ax. He stood between the bear and his family.

The older children put their arms around each other. They were too scared to make a sound.

Out of the buckbrush leaped Mother Deer. She whistled through her nostrils. She stood on her hind feet. She pawed air in front of the bear's nose. Those hooves were as sharp as the man's ax. The bear dodged, snarling.

Bleating with terror, New Fawn bumped into the man with the ax. He bumped into the children. He did not know what to do with his long, thin legs. But, oh, he knew he must use them!

New Fawn stumbled. He fell to his front knees. He dug at the ground with his tiny hind hooves, but his feet were too far apart.

Both Mother Deer and the bear stood on their hind legs like dancing partners. They stamped a

## ANIMAL BABIES

circle around the man. The bear dropped to its four feet, confused by the tangle of people and deer.

For a split second there was no way to know which way the bear would charge.

Mother Deer whistled loudly. That sound meant, "Run!"

New Fawn got up from his knees. He ran! He heard the crash and crackle of brush as the bear left the picnic table. He heard Mother Deer's final whistle. He did not understand the words, but he heard the gladness in the voices of the people.

"That fawn saved our baby's life," the woman said. "I wonder if he knows?"

Mother Deer overtook New Fawn. She pushed her nose against his skull and ribs and knobby knees. Then she licked his spots with a loving tongue.

New Fawn wriggled and bounced. He was ready to look into all the secret places of the forest. He was no longer afraid of the bear.

New Fawn did not even need his spots.

For New Fawn could RUN!

## Mrs. Coon

Raccoons hunt all night. They sleep all day.

But one day Mrs. Coon was awakened at noon by a lot of noise down on the ground. She lived in the limb of a hollow tree which stood in a campground. Sleepily she peeked out. She watched a man and two long-legged boys unload a pickup truck. They set up a tent beside her home tree.

Mrs. Coon was three years old. She was used to people. She had helped herself to campers' food all summer. Greedily she looked at the boxes and bags on the picnic table. She smelled fruit!

## ANIMAL BABIES

She did not sleep well that afternoon. She kept waking up and chewing air. *Chirr-rr*. That fruit smelled good.

At last the shadows filled the spaces among the bushes and young trees. Mrs. Coon left her tree.

Softly she padded around the tent. She watched the man at the campfire. She sniffed the food.

One of the boys was eating an apple. The black tip of Mrs. Coon's white nose wiggled with greed.

The firelight winked on the boy's belt buckle. Mrs. Coon liked that. She liked shiny things almost as much as she liked food.

Softly and sweetly she trilled while she waited for the chance to steal that apple and that buckle.

"Do you hear something?" the boy asked.

"Probably a night bird," the man told him.

The boy took another big bite. "Oh, sure," he said.

Mrs. Coon's grayish-brown fur was the color of the shadow where she sat. Wide black and white stripes went around her bushy tail. Her foxlike face wore a black Halloween mask. A white band across

her forehead looked like a bandit's handkerchief. If the boy had looked her way, he might have thought her white stripes were dead sticks and twigs among the shadows.

But he did not look.

The man said, "Put some wood on the fire, please, Dick."

Dick laid his apple on the log where he sat. He stood up. The minute his back was turned, Mrs. Coon darted. She snatched the apple. She slid back into the shadows.

"Hey, Pete, what happened to my apple?" Dick wanted to know.

"You ate it," Pete said.

"No, I just put it down and—"

Mrs. Coon heard no anger in the boys' voices. Still, she made no noise in her getaway. She went straight to the brook which ran through the campground. In the darkness she washed the apple. Then she ate it, even the seeds.

It took more than half an apple to feed Mrs. Coon. Singing to herself, she padded along the



*Mrs. Coon*

brook. She knew just where to find the mice, insects, and fish she needed for her supper. She washed each bite of food, using her forepaws like hands.

When it grew black-dark in the woods, Mrs. Coon felt that all was right in the world. She was a night hunter, quite at home with the bats which swooped after mosquitoes. She was careful when the great hawks and owls dived. She hid when the cougar screamed. She went up a tree when a coyote trotted down a deer trail.

While Mrs. Coon hid from the coyote, the wind carried a wisp of smoke to her nose. She remembered the campfire and the apple. The minute the coyote went over the hill, Mrs. Coon climbed out of the tree. Quickly she went back to the camp.

She could hear sleeping sounds in the tent. She felt the warmth of the banked campfire. And she smelled apples!

These people were used to camping. Their meat hung from the limbs of a tree. Most of their food was in tin cans. But Mrs. Coon's nose told her there were apples in that knapsack.

• ANIMAL BABIES

The knapsack was tightly strapped and buckled. Mrs. Coon loved a puzzle. In no time at all she opened the knapsack and helped herself to the apples she found there. One by one she carried them down to the brook. Her sweet, chirruping call brought all of her children out of the black night. They sat in a row to wash and eat the apples.

When she had eaten, Mrs. Coon played. She tried to catch the moonbeams in the brook. Then she bounced about in patches of starshine on the ground. At last she decided it was bedtime.

When she reached the camp, she sat by the ashes of the cooking fire. She was puzzled by the warmth on the ground. Then she slid into the tent.

She poked her nose into the pile of clothing the boys had left beside their bedrolls. Eagerly she emptied their pockets. She carried away their treasures.

When the campers woke up, Mrs. Coon was sound asleep in the hollow limb above the tent.

"Hey! Who took my sack of peanuts?" Dick grumbled.

His father said, "Look around for tracks. We may have had a porcupine in camp last night."

"Do porcupines use knives?" Pete asked. "My scout knife is missing."

Later the campers got ready to fish in the brook. The older boy found the open knapsack. He saw that the apples were gone. "Hey!" Dick shouted. "Some guy has been here snitchin' stuff. Animals don't know how to use buckles!"

"Or scout knives," Pete added.

"Be reasonable," their father said cheerfully. "Do you see any human footprints?"

In the middle of the afternoon Mrs. Coon looked down on the picnic table. She winked and blinked at what she saw. Several spoons lay on the table. They seemed to hold little pools of light.

Mrs. Coon climbed down the inside of the tree. She came out into the campground through a hole just below the ground. Her tunnel was well hidden by huckleberry bushes, bear grass, and purple asters.

When she was sure the campers were away, she played with the shiny spoons. She hid them in her

ANIMAL BABIES

tunnel along with the scout knife. Then she finished her nap.

At suppertime Dick said, "What's going on here? I can't find the spoons!"

"We'll hunt for them later," his father said. "We don't need spoons for corn on the cob."

When the corn began to boil, Mrs. Coon woke up. The corn smelled like something in a raccoon's dream. She snapped her sharp teeth. She chewed air. Greedily she opened and shut her fingerlike toes.

That smell was more than Mrs. Coon could stand.



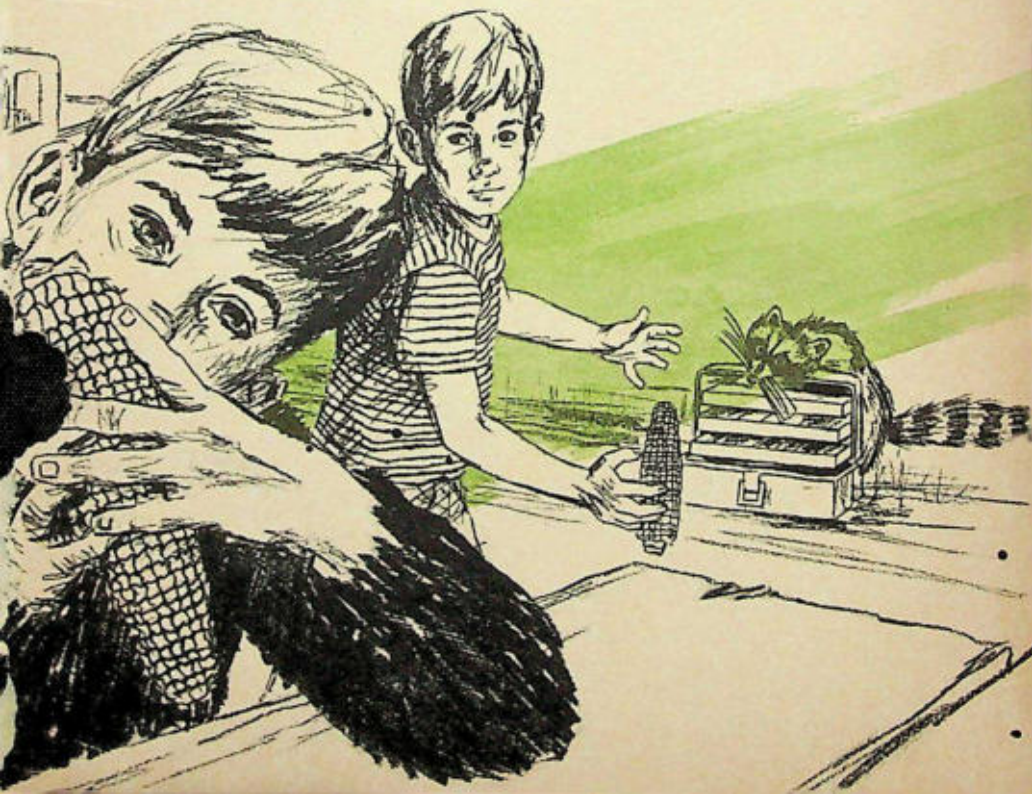
*Mrs. Coon*

Out of the hollow tree she climbed. She ran around the tent. She hid among the fishing tackle. She sat as near the pot of boiling corn as she could get without being seen.

At the table the campers spread butter on the corn. They began to eat.

Mrs. Coon stood on her hind legs. She made soft little begging sounds. She even took a few steps toward the table.

One of the boys turned his head. She moved back into shadow.



## ANIMAL BABIES

When she thought she could not wait another minute, Dick yelled, "Ow, that's hot!" He dropped an ear of corn on the ground.

Mrs. Coon shot under that table. She sniffed the corn, patted it, sniffed again. It was still almost too hot to handle. But she clamped her jaws on the juicy ear of corn and hurried off to the brook.

"I saw something," Pete said.

"Me, too," Dick told him. "Hey! That ear of corn is gone!"

Mrs. Coon had always lived in the forest. She had never tasted corn. But, oh! how she liked it. She gnawed the cob as long as she could taste a drop of corn juice.

After her night hunt for meadow mice, Mrs. Coon visited the tent again. This time she stole a real treasure—something jingly as well as shiny.

Again she was in her hollow tree fast asleep when the campers ate breakfast. She barely heard voices, walking feet, slamming, banging. She moved, but she did not awaken. Words meant nothing to her. How could she know the campers were loading the

pickup truck to leave the forest?

Dick shouted, "What's holding up the parade, Dad? Pete and I are ready to go."

"So am I, Dick," the man shouted back. "But I can't find my car keys."

"Look in your pockets," Pete called.

"What do you think I've been doing?" asked the man. "Come help me look for them."

All morning the three campers hunted for the missing car keys. They unpacked the truck. They opened bags, boxes, and knapsacks. They shook out blankets and clothing.

"No luck, fellows," their father said at noon. "We might just as well eat lunch. Then we'll try again."

Sleepily Mrs. Coon turned over when she smelled the coffee. She did not wake up.

All afternoon the man and boys searched the ground where they had camped.

"What are these tracks, Dad?" Dick asked, after he had seen the same track many times.

"I'm no expert," his father said, "but my guess is raccoon. No wonder we've missed so much stuff."

## ANIMAL BABIES

They're as bad as crows for taking shiny things."

"Maybe there's a den around here," Pete said eagerly.

"If you go messin'g around a coon's den, be sure the owner is out," his father warned. "A raccoon can kill a dog."

"What'll we do?" Dick asked. "We can't sit around here till we grow beards."

"We'll try making a lure," his father said. "Where's the honey jar?"

Pete found the jar of honey in the food locker. The boys watched their father pour a cupful of honey on a large flat stone in the sun. Bees and deerflies came to it almost at once. They began to feed.

The man laid the shiny jar lid beside the pool of honey. The warm, sweet smell of the honey made both Pete and Dick lick their lips.

"We'll wait in the truck," their father said.

It was late afternoon. Night wind was creeping into the campground when Dick saw movement among the bushes at the foot of the hollow tree. "Ssh," he whispered. "I think we have a visitor."



## ANIMAL BABIES

There was a long wait. Then a small animal about the size of a badger stepped out of the purple asters.

It was Mrs. Coon.

After another wait she trotted across the open space to the flat stone. There she tried to scoop up the sticky honey. When that did not work, she sat down and licked her forepaws. When she finished, she chirred happily.

Then she picked up the shiny jar lid. She danced. She pranced. She tossed and caught the lid. She hid it from herself, then ran on tiptoe to find it again. At last she tired of the game. She started toward the brook.

Just as Dick muttered, "Nuts!" she came back to the jar lid. She picked it up and trotted to her tree.

"Look!" Dick whispered. "She came out of those asters. She's going back the same way."

"I should have guessed," his father said. "Raccoons nest in hollow trees. That old tree is as hollow as a drum."

Almost at once Mrs. Coon trotted across the clearing again. She did not carry the jar lid with her. It

was safely hidden. She was going to the brook.

It did not take long for the campers to find the tunnel to Mrs. Coon's nest. But it took both time and work to dig out the treasures she had hidden. It was so dark Pete held a flashlight while his father dug.

"There's my scout knife!" Pete said gladly when Dad dug under the tree.

"The spoons," Dick added.

"And the car keys!" their father said, with a whistle of relief.

"Let's leave the jar lid," said Pete. "I feel like a thief, taking all her stuff."

"Her stuff!" Dick said.

"Sure," Pete said, grinning. "She wore the mask and stole it first, didn't she?"

The campers packed and left the campground.

It was daylight before Mrs. Coon came back to the hollow tree. She scolded about the pile of dirt beside her tunnel. Then she saw the shiny jar lid. She played a prancing, dancing, happy game with the lid till the first bird chirped a sleepy "Good morning." Then she climbed up the tree to bed.

## *Porky Porcupine*

Porky Porcupine climbed the alder tree by the brook because he was hungry. When he found an old scar on the bark, he grunted happily.

Teeth marks told him another porcupine had fed there. As all porcupines do, he climbed a little higher. He sank his big, yellow teeth into the sweet inner bark. Busily he chipped, gnawed, and chewed.

When he had fed on the sugar in the tree, Porky turned on the branch. He dug in with the claws on his forepaws. He had gone up headfirst. He started

*Porky Porcupine*

down the tree the same way, headfirst.

It did not work! Almost at once his weight flipped him backward. He fell all the way to the ground.

Porky slapped the ground with his thick tail. He chattered his big teeth. Then he whined, "Uhn, uhn, uhn."

He was a baby "quill pig," less than a month old but already weaned. He was born knowing where and how to find food. And he could climb up. He had to find out for himself how to get out of a tree without falling.

Porky grumbled while he waddled along. He did not see the coyote on the trail until they met face to face. The coyote pulled back his lips.

Porky Porcupine whirled like a ballet dancer. Baby though he was, he raised his stubby tail. Let that coyote move one inch too near. He would get thousands of sharp little fishhook quills in his mouth and nose!

The coyote took the warning. He trotted on.

When Porky grew hungry, he climbed again. And again he fell out of the tree!

## ANIMAL BABIES

The third time he climbed, Porky hunted for a limb that sloped down.

Within a few days Porky learned to climb down as well as up. He learned to go down backward.

Porky was always hungry. When grown he would weigh about twenty pounds. This was his growing time. He must eat, eat, eat.

When the wild strawberries ripened in the high country, Porky ate the tiny red berries. Then he ate the leaves. Porky went from one open spot in the forest to another. He ate every strawberry he could find.

And still he was hungry! He ate twigs. He gnawed some old horns shed by a deer. He ate dandelions. But he was hungry, always hungry.

Then one day Porky found a taste treat. A camper had dropped an ax in the forest. The handle was smooth from many years of use. The salt of human perspiration stayed in the wood. Porky Porcupine ate that ax handle right down to its rusty blade.

Having tasted salt, any porcupine must find more. Porky sniffed and nibbled. He tasted and gnawed.



ANIMAL BABIES

But nowhere did he find any salt.

Bristling with sharp quills, slow-pokey Porky waddled up and over a hill. He ate some fresh twigs.

Then he went up and over another hill. All day he wandered. But he found no salt.

In the late afternoon Porky rested on a limb of a spruce tree. His four feet dangled in the air. A porcupine eats when he is hungry and sleeps when he is tired. Whether it is light or dark, hot or cold, makes little difference to him. Young Porky was tired. He slept.

At dusk the doves began their lonely calls. Clumsy as a sackful of sticks, Porky backed down the spruce tree. He went up and over another hill, hunting for salt.

When he stepped, his quills clicked. Long guard hairs grew among the quills. These stiff hairs waved in the breeze. His heavy tail dragged through pine needles, grass, weeds, and wild flowers.

He did not find salt.

The next morning Porky squeezed under a fence. He stepped into a hard-beaten path. There were



*Porky Porcupine*

places where the earth smelled like the ax handle. "Uhn, uhn," Porky sang in a tuneless kind of way. His big snout touched the ground.

Right in the middle of the path lay something Porky had never seen in high country. Porky grunted. Then he squealed. Porky could not know he had found a potato chip, but he ate every crumb. He even licked the ground.

Porky made eager little squealy pig grunts. He trotted down the path, *ker-lump, ker-lump*, looking like a lost pincushion.

Suddenly he came face to face with an animal that looked like a coyote but was not a coyote. Porky's eyesight was very poor, but he saw other strange creatures, too.

"Guard!" a girl shouted. "Come back here. Don't you know a porcupine when you see one?"

"Yeah!" a second girl said. "You'll get your face full of stickers."

The big dog named Guard barked several times. Porky whirled. With his tail in the air, he waited to strike.



## ANIMAL BABIES

Guard was wise. Several times he ran around Porky. Then Guard snapped, close to the ground, swift as snake fangs. He tried to flip Porky onto his back. With his bare stomach turned up, Porky would be helpless.

Porky was not a fighter. He moved away from Guard. When he reached a tree trunk, Porky hugged it. He started to climb. He knew he was safe. No animal dares slap a porcupine's back and tail.

Porky did not know he was in a girls' camp. But he did know he had found the salt he wanted! In the days that followed, Porky gnawed the hitching rail where the girls tied the horses. He ate on the top fence rail. He chewed the gate. There seemed to be no end to the places human hands had left salt.

The girls left skin salt on doors, windowsills, tools, swings, and teeter-totters. They dropped apple cores and popcorn. The cook threw away table scraps. Porky ate and ate and ATE! He became so fat he could hardly waddle.

His problem was the dog, Guard. Porky was no more alert than other porcupines. It was easy for

*Porky Porcupine*

Guard to hide and jump out at Porky. Most of the time Porky was sleepy from overeating. It was hard to keep away from Guard.

When the girls or the dog came too near, Porky climbed a tree. He felt safe in a tree.

But one day that feeling changed. Some girls and Guard found the tree where he was sleeping. Porky lay on a limb in plain sight.

"It's a porcupine!" a girl shouted. "Let's catch him."

"Sure," another girl said. "The girls from Cabin Three caught fish for the cookout tonight. We can roast a porcupine!"

The girls shook the tree. They threw rocks. They hit the branches with long sticks.

One girl even climbed a nearby tree. She tried to reach across to poke Porky out of the pine. When that did not work, she tried to lasso him.

Girls giggled. Girls shouted.

Guard barked. He jumped and pranced on his hind legs.

Porky climbed higher and higher. He chattered

his teeth at the noisy girls and dog.

After a while the girls went away. They told each other cheerfully, "We can always eat hot dogs."

Porky knew nothing of their change of plan. But he knew they took the dog with them. He backed his heavy body along a branch till he was hidden by green pine needles. Then he finished his nap.

When Porky awoke, it was dusk. This was the hour when he felt most active and alert. He backed to the ground. Slowly he left the safety of the tree. He could not see Guard, but he could hear him. The dog was near the cookhouse.

Porky wanted to raid the garbage pails, but they were near the cookhouse, too. Common sense told him to move on to a new feeding ground.

It was dark by the time Porky reached the camp's stables. He chewed a leather strap. He gnawed the edge of a manger. With the good taste of salt in his mouth, he went back into the forest.

Porky was fat and lazy after his long stay in the girls' camp. When he found a deer trail that went downhill, he took it. Once in a while he stopped to

*Porky Porcupine*

chew a dandelion leaf. He missed the taste of salt. "Uhn, uhn, uhn," he cried, all on one flat note.

Suddenly Porky raised his big snout. He blinked his nearsighted little eyes. Something wonderful was floating in the air—the smell of fish and smoke and SALT.

With all his quills clicking and clacking, Porky began to trot. He trotted right up to the door of a little shed. This was where the camp's caretaker smoked fish for winter food. Porky knew nothing of caretakers and smoked fish—but he knew about salt. He became quite dizzy, turning this way, that way.

Porky gnawed. He nibbled. He tasted.

He squeezed his fat body under the floorboards of the shed. And there he found a treasure. Porky found a lumpy, bumpy cloth sack. It was filled with dirty salt the caretaker had thrown away.

Just looking at all that salt filled Porky with joy. He swayed from side to side.

While Porky swished and rattled, Guard bounced up to the door of the shed. He poked his nose into the open space under the floor of the old shack. He



*Porky Porcupine*

whined eagerly. He dug at the dirt till pine needles flew.

Porky chattered his big yellow teeth.

Guard did not go away.

Porky looked at all that salt. Then he walked straight toward Guard. He spun around. He lashed his tail with all his force. A full-grown porcupine can nail a leather glove to a tree with one slap of his tail. Porky was now more than half-grown, and angry as well.

Guard was alert. He jumped, but not in time. Two quills stabbed his tender nose. Guard yelped with pain and rolled backward.

Porky followed. Again he lashed his tail.

Up the trail ran Guard, yelping for help and pawing at the quills in his nose.

Porky chattered his teeth a few times at Guard. He grumbled, "Uhn, uhn." Then he went waddling back to his salt.

No dog was going to keep Porky Porcupine from staying as long as that salt lasted. And, when the lumpy salt was gone, he could eat the shed!

## *Spike Bighorn*

The first snow of winter caught Spike Bighorn and his mother in the open valley, far from the cliffs. Spike was used to snow on the ground. He lived in the highest part of the "high country." Up there the snow did not melt, even in August.

But Spike was not used to snow in the air. It excited him.

He danced about like a lamb in daisies.

He licked snowflakes out of the air.

He winked snow from his eyelashes.

*Spike Bighorn*

He tried to toss the flakes from the long hair which grew at the roots of his new horns. . .

Spike lowered his head. He ran toward a pine. One day his horns would become great arches of bone. They would curve from his brow to the top of his brown shoulders. Now his horns barely reached the tips of his ears. But they were sharp. Wood chips flew when he hit the tree.

When he *baa-ed* it was a happy sound. He seemed to ask, "See me? See what I did?"

"I saw," might have been Mother Bighorn's answer. She talked with her mouth full. She was old and wise. She knew that soon snow would cover the green sweet meadow grass. And so she ate while she could.

While she chewed, Mother Bighorn turned her head this way, that way. Her golden-brown eyes missed nothing that moved in the valley. Her solid-looking ears stood out like the branches of a pine. She sorted sounds. They came from the strip of forest under the peak. A lake was hidden there.

The bighorn is a Rocky Mountain sheep. But





## ANIMAL BABIES.

this animal is not calm and stupid. A bighorn is very hard to catch. Both hunters and meat-eating animals like its flesh.

• Bighorns have learned to take care of themselves. The more they are hunted, the more alert they become.

• Mother Bighorn had spent a lifetime fighting with or running from wolves, coyotes, cats, men, and eagles. Seldom did she lose one of her lambs. She did not choose to be hurt or to let Spike be hurt today.

Her ears told her that wolves had cornered a moose down at the end of the lake. If the wolves made the kill, Mother Bighorn and Spike would be safe—until another hungry meat-eater came along. If the moose won, the wolves would be angry and looking for a meal. It took no special reasoning power to know this. In high country the strong, wary, bold, and keen-eyed animal lives. The weak and lazy animal dies.

Mother Bighorn did not worry and fret. She just ate, watched, and listened.

*Spike Bighorn*

Spike knew his mother was watching some spot at the end of the valley. He felt safe. It was five miles to the lake.

Spike could not be bothered by trouble so far away. He leaped his highest leap. He bent his back like a bucking horse. When his feet came down, they punched just one hole in the snow.

Suddenly Mother Bighorn stopped feeding. She faced the lake.

This frightened Spike. He moved close to his mother. His shoulder bumped her shoulder. He, too, looked at the trees which hid the water. Spike was almost as tall as his mother. But he was only six months old. He needed her protection. He *baa-ed* nervously.

Very slowly Mother Bighorn stepped forward. She lifted her head, searching for the air current with the most exact news of the battle of wolves and moose. She heard great roars of rage and pain. These were followed by a split second of silence. Then the wolves sang their victory song.

When the wolves had fed, the coyotes would move





## ANIMAL BABIES.

in for leftovers. Later, smaller animals and birds would pick the bones. And after a while gnawing animals would eat even the bones.

Mother Bighorn knew these things, but she stepped about nervously. She had a chance to protect herself and her lamb from danger she could see, hear, and smell.

One dangerous hunter was missing from the group of animals at the end of the lake. That hunter was the cat.

For several minutes Mother Bighorn stared at the strip of forest. The trees were turning brown, but trees do not move. Three or four miles away a shape moved. It waited and moved again.

Mother Bighorn did not have to be told. That was a mountain lion there near the trees, and it had not fed.

With a little shiver Spike watched and listened, too. He gave a nervous whimper. It was both a gasp of fright and a promise to obey the commands of his wise, old mother.

Mother Bighorn pretended to graze. With her head

*Spike Bighorn*

down she moved a few steps toward the cliffs. Then she looked at the spot at the end of the valley. The spot had moved. It was smaller.

Any wise animal knows the habits of its enemy. Mother Bighorn knew the mountain lion had seen them. She knew he was pretending he did not see them. This meant he was planning his attack. It gave her time to act.

Here among deep grass and bushes, the mountain lion could make an easy kill. But in the peaks—up there Mother Bighorn could outwit even a hungry cat.

She knew, however, that she must not move quickly. This would tell the mountain lion that she had seen him.

Several times she moved, stopped, moved, and stopped again. Spike no longer pranced and leaped. He followed his mother, as close as her own brand-new footprint.

The mountain lion disappeared.

When Mother Bighorn missed him at the end of the valley, she ran!



*Spike Bighorn*

Spike stayed so close to his mother's flying heels, she kicked snow in his face. Even Spike knew that the huge cat planned to strike before the bighorns reached the cliffs.

"Baa!" he bleated in fright.

Mother Bighorn led Spike toward the rocky slide where no trees grew. A mountain sheep can run straight up a slide so steep other animals fall. Spike panted as he drew near the slippery rocks. There he would be safe.

Suddenly Mother Bighorn turned.

With a frightened gasp, Spike followed. To his surprise he did not feel the cut of the great cat's claws.

Then Spike saw a big coyote slip out from behind a boulder.

Mother Bighorn had seen the coyote, of course. She circled the coyote. This gave Spike the chance to run straight up the side of the mountain.

This was not the first time the coyote had hunted mountain sheep. He paid no attention to Mother Bighorn. He chased Spike.

## ANIMAL BABIES.

Spike heard the sound of air in the coyote's open mouth. He saw the dangling red tongue. Just as Mother Bighorn had done, Spike turned to circle the coyote. Around and around raced Spike and his mother. Their cloven hooves held on the steep slope.

The coyote's paws were padded. The coyote slipped. Ice balls formed between his toes. Small stones rolled under his feet.

Mother Bighorn and Spike met as they ran in a widening circle like children playing a snow game. A quick look told Spike the coyote was falling behind.

But what was Mother Bighorn going to do? When the big coyote had surprised her, she had been running from the mountain lion.

Mother Bighorn stayed out in the open. She stayed away from the boulders which might hide the cat.

Spike, too, stayed on the rockslide.

At last the coyote gave up. He limped away. With a glad little bleat, Spike let Mother Bighorn know he was safe.

*Spike Bighorn*

Mother Bighorn stared at bushes and boulders. Then she crossed the slide.

Spike went with her. Up, up, and up they climbed to the peaks where only the golden eagle dares attack a mountain sheep.

Both knew they had outwitted the cat. They heard his angry shriek, off to the right and far down the mountain.

Tomorrow Mother Bighorn would lead Spike back to the valley for food.

As soon as it began to snow, the sheep fed where they could dig up grass. The cat would be in the valley, too. So would the wolves and coyotes. The valley was their hunting ground. Today's escape was a part of a dangerous game played every day. That game was Life and Death.

An animal lives in the here and now. The coyote and cat were out of sight and beyond hearing. Spike forgot about them. But he was a little wiser now, a little more careful than he had been down in the valley.

By this time Spike and Mother Bighorn were





## ANIMAL BABIES

walking a ledge. The stone path was narrow. The ribs on Mother Bighorn's left side rubbed the stone wall of the cliff. The ribs on her right side curved out into the space above the deep, storm-filled canyon.

The ledge was split. Every few yards Spike and his mother leaped across great gaps in the stone. They landed again on the narrow, icy ledge. To protect Spike, Mother Bighorn walked behind him. More than once in his short life she had kept him from falling.

As they climbed higher the wind blew harder. It threw bits of snow, sharp as tiny icicles.

Spike was used to cold.

He was used to the snapping of rocks in the cold air.

He was used to stones which lost their place on the peak and rolled down, down, down.

Suddenly there was a new sound—a grinding, sliding sound. A boulder tore loose from the mountain. It started a rockslide.

Just as he started to jump over a hole in the

*Spike Bighorn*

path, Spike saw a black crack in the white snow. He bleated in fear.

Spike felt a hard push on his rump. For the flicker of an eyelash three things were in the air—Spike, Mother Bighorn, and the boulder. Nothing but space lay below them.

Mother Bighorn sprang mightily with her powerful leg muscles. One hoof even nicked the falling boulder. She swayed. Her ribs bumped Spike and pushed him against the stone wall. She landed above Spike on the path.

For a time as short as a breath she wobbled on the very edge of the canyon. Then she found her balance. She went on up the ledge.

Gladly Spike followed.

On a great windswept ledge Spike and Mother Bighorn turned their faces into the storm. This was their world—this high place of wind, ice, and snow, of stone, sky, and silence.

This was where the herd slept. Each bighorn had scraped a bed in the rocky soil on the ledge.

Spike was tired. He went straight to his own bed.

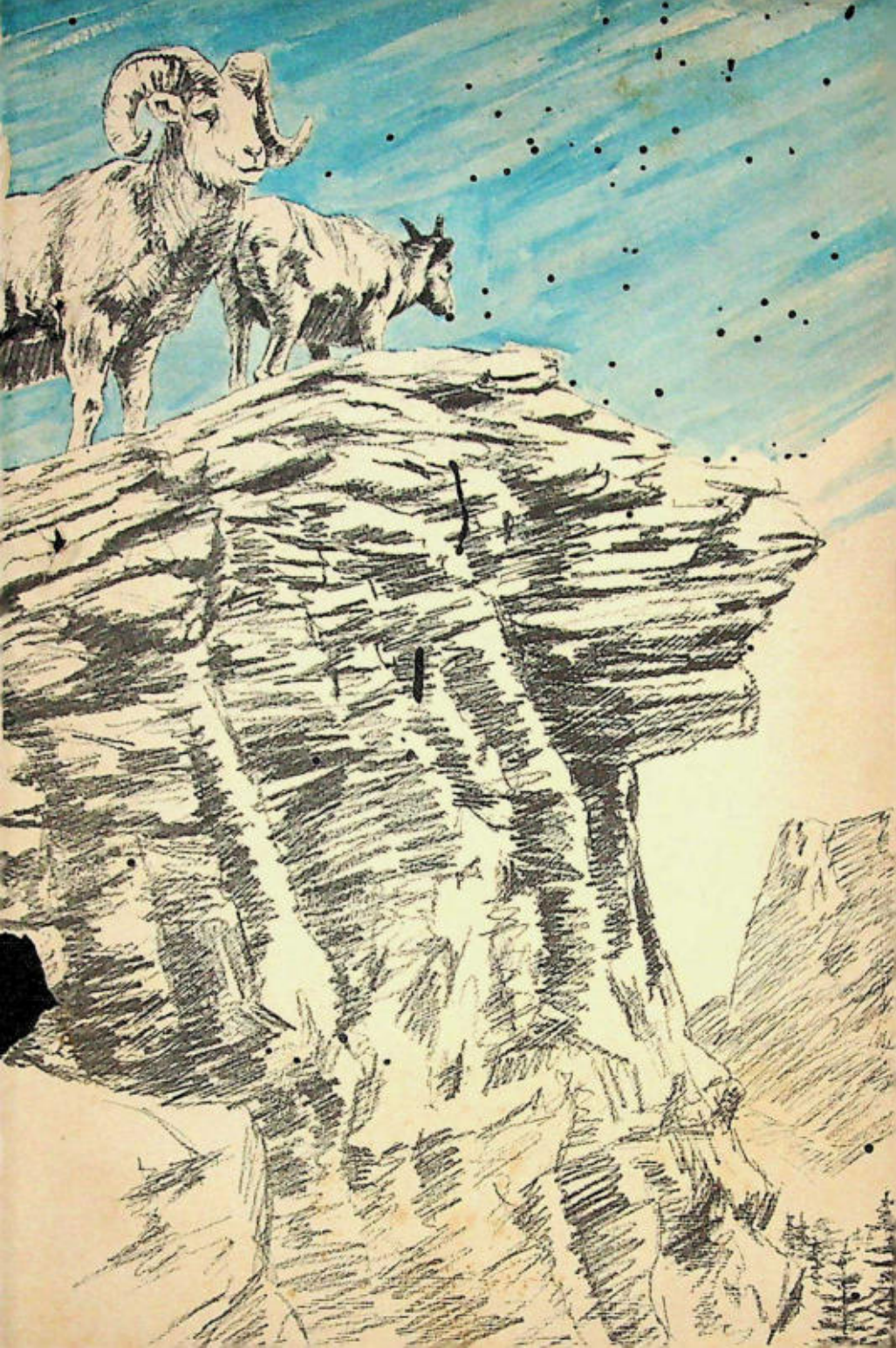


His thick fur was his warm sleeping bag.

Spike did not think of the mountain lion, the coyote, and the sliding rock. Those dangers were past.

Another day would come. He must do some growing in the night. He must be ready for the adventures of that new day.





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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Every person makes up his own "high country" and thinks how wonderful it would be to live in that place where he is wise and strong enough to solve every problem. In that country he dreams about, he is a kind of king and nothing ever goes wrong.

Gladys Baker Bond lives in her high country. The sky is wide and clean. The mountains march in a long line from Alaska to the tip of South America. The rivers are deep and roll to the sea; men are still finding new lakes. Deserts stretch out as far as the eye can see, and then the mountains become a misty blue smudge on the skyline. Forests are thick and silent. Little brooks bubble through moss and pine needles. Snow falls, sun shines, or great storms whip the sky-tall pines.

In this great land the animals—large, small, on hoofs or on paws—live their secret lives. Mrs. Bond feels privileged to live in this high country and wants to share it with young readers who live in cities, but still dream.

