

## BUSTER BEAR GOES FISHING

Buster Bear yawned as he lay on his comfortable bed of leaves and watched the first early morning sunbeams creeping through the Green Forest to chase out the Black Shadows. Once more he yawned, and slowly got to his feet and shook himself. Then he walked over to a big pine-tree, stood up on his hind legs, reached as high up on the trunk of the tree as he could, and scratched the bark with his great claws. After that he yawned until it seemed as if his jaws would crack, and then sat down to think what he wanted for breakfast.

While he sat there, trying to make up his mind what would taste best, he was listening to the sounds that told of the waking of all the little people who live in the Green Forest. He heard Sammy Jay way off in the distance screaming, "Thief! Thief!" and grinned. "I wonder," thought Buster, "if someone has stolen Sammy's breakfast, or if he has stolen the breakfast of someone else. Probably he is the thief himself."

He heard Chatterer the Red Squirrel scolding as fast as he could make his tongue go and working himself into a terrible rage. "Must be that Chatterer got out of bed the wrong way this morning," thought he.

He heard Blacky the Crow cawing at the top of his lungs, and he knew by the sound that Blacky was getting into mischief of some kind. He heard the sweet voices of happy little singers, and they were good to hear. But most of all he listened to a merry, low, silvery laugh that never stopped but went on and on, until he just felt as if he must laugh too. It was the voice of the Laughing Brook. And as Buster listened it suddenly came to him just what he wanted for breakfast.

"I'm going fishing," said he in his deep grumbly-rumbly voice to no one in particular. "Yes, Sir, I'm going fishing. I want some fat trout for my breakfast."

He shuffled along over to the Laughing Brook, and straight to a little pool of which he knew, and as he drew near he took the greatest care not to make the teeniest, weeniest bit of noise. Now it just happened that early as he was, someone was before Buster Bear. When he came in sight of the little pool, who should he see but another fisherman there, who had already caught a fine fat trout. Who was it? Why, Little Joe Otter to be sure. He was just climbing up the bank with the fat trout in his mouth. Buster Bear's own mouth watered as he saw it. Little Joe sat down on the bank and prepared to enjoy his breakfast. He hadn't seen Buster Bear, and he didn't know that he or anyone else was anywhere near.

Buster Bear tiptoed up very softly until he was right behind Little Joe Otter. "Woof, woof!" said he in his deepest, most grumbly-rumbly voice. "That's a very fine looking trout. I wouldn't mind if I had it myself."

Little Joe Otter gave a frightened squeal and without even turning to see who was speaking dropped his fish and dived headfirst into the Laughing Brook. Buster Bear sprang forward and with one of his big paws caught the fat trout just as it was slipping back into the water.

"Here's your trout, Mr. Otter," said he, as Little Joe put his head out of water to see who had frightened him so. "Come and get it."



But Little Joe wouldn't. The fact is, he was afraid to. He snarled at Buster Bear and called him a thief and everything bad he could think of. Buster didn't seem to

mind. He chuckled as if he thought it all a great joke and repeated his invitation to Little Joe to come and get his fish. But Little Joe just turned his back and went off down the Laughing Brook in a great rage.

"It's too bad to waste such a fine fish," said Buster thoughtfully. "I wonder what I'd better do with it." And while he was wondering, he ate it all up. Then he started down the Laughing Brook to try to catch some for himself.

### **FARMER BROWN'S BOY HAS NO LUCK AT ALL**

Farmer Brown's boy tramped through the Green Forest, whistling merrily. He always whistles when he feels light-hearted, and he always feels light-hearted when he goes fishing. You see, he is just as fond of fishing as is Little Joe Otter or Billy Mink or Buster Bear. And now he was making his way through the Green Forest to the Laughing Brook, sure that by the time he had followed it down to the Smiling Pool he would have a fine lot of trout to take home. He knew every pool in the Laughing Brook where the trout love to hide, did Farmer Brown's boy, and it was just the kind of a morning when the trout should be hungry. So he whistled as he tramped along, and his whistle was good to hear.

When he reached the first little pool he baited his hook very carefully and then, taking the greatest care to keep out of sight of any trout that might be in the little pool, he began to fish. Now Farmer Brown's boy learned a long time ago that to be a successful fisherman one must have a great deal of patience, so though he didn't get a bite right away as he had expected to, he wasn't the least bit discouraged. He kept very quiet and fished and fished, patiently waiting for a foolish trout to take his hook. But he didn't get so much as a nibble. "Either the trout have lost their appetite or they have grown very wise," muttered Farmer Brown's boy, as after a long time he moved on to the next little pool.

There the same thing happened. He was very patient, very, very patient, but his patience brought no reward, not so much as the faintest kind of a nibble. Farmer Brown's boy trudged on to the next pool, and there was a puzzled frown on his freckled face. Such a thing never had happened before. He didn't know what to make of it. All the night before he had dreamed about the delicious dinner of fried trout he would have the next day, and now—well, if he didn't catch some trout pretty soon, that splendid dinner would never be anything but a dream.

"If I didn't know that nobody else comes fishing here, I should think that somebody had been here this very morning and caught all the fish or else frightened them so that they are all in hiding," said he, as he trudged on to the next little pool. "I never had such bad luck in all my life before. Hello! What's this?"

There, on the bank beside the little pool, were the heads of three trout. Farmer Brown's boy scowled down at them more puzzled than ever. "Somebody *has* been fishing here, and they have had better luck than I have," thought he. He looked up the Laughing Brook and down the Laughing Brook and this way and that way, but no one was to be seen. Then he picked up one of the little heads and looked at it sharply. "It wasn't cut off with a knife; it was bitten off!" he exclaimed. "I wonder now if Billy Mink is the scamp who has spoiled my fun."

Thereafter he kept a sharp lookout for signs of Billy Mink, but though he found two or three more trout heads, he saw no other signs and he caught no fish. This puzzled him more than ever. It didn't seem possible that such a little fellow as Billy Mink could have caught or frightened all the fish or have eaten so many. Besides, he didn't remember ever having known Billy to leave heads around that way. Billy sometimes catches more fish than he can eat, but then he usually hides them. The farther he went down the Laughing Brook, the more puzzled Farmer Brown's boy grew. It made him feel very queer. He would have felt still more queer if he had known that all the time two other fishermen who had been before him were watching him and chuckling to themselves. They were Little Joe Otter and Buster Bear.

#### **FARMER BROWN'S BOY FEELS HIS HAIR RISE**

*'Twas just a sudden odd surprise  
Made Farmer Brown's boy's hair to rise.*

That's a funny thing for hair to do—rise up all of a sudden—isn't it? But that is just what the hair on Farmer Brown's boy's head did the day he went fishing in the Laughing Brook and had no luck at all. There are just two things that make hair rise—anger and fear. Anger sometimes makes the hair on the back and neck of Bowser the Hound and of some other little people bristle and stand up, and you know the hair on the tail of Black Pussy stands on end until her tail looks twice as big as it really is. Both anger and fear make it do that. But there is only one thing that can make the hair on the head of Farmer Brown's boy rise, and as it isn't anger, of course it must be fear.

It never had happened before. You see, there isn't much of anything that Farmer Brown's boy is really afraid of. Perhaps he wouldn't have been afraid this time if it hadn't been for the surprise of what he found. You see when he had found the heads of those trout on the bank he knew right away that someone else had been fishing, and that was why he couldn't catch any; but it didn't seem possible that little Billy Mink could have eaten all those trout, and Farmer Brown's boy didn't once think of Little Joe Otter, and so he was very, very much puzzled.

He was turning it all over in his mind and studying what it could mean, when he came to a little muddy place on the bank of the Laughing Brook, and there he saw

something that made his eyes look as if they would pop right out of his head, and it was right then that he felt his hair rise. Anyway, that is what he said when he told about it afterward. What was it he saw? What do you think? Why, it was a footprint in the soft mud. Yes, Sir, that's what it was, and all it was. But it was the biggest footprint Farmer Brown's boy ever had seen, and it looked as if it had been made only a few minutes before. It was the footprint of Buster Bear.

Now Farmer Brown's boy didn't know that Buster Bear had come down to the Green Forest to live. He never had heard of a Bear being in the Green Forest. And so he was so surprised that he had hard work to believe his own eyes, and he had a queer feeling all over,—a little chilly feeling, although it was a warm day. Somehow, he didn't feel like meeting Buster Bear. If he had had his terrible gun with him, it might have been different. But he didn't, and so he suddenly made up his mind that he didn't want to fish any more that day. He had a funny feeling, too, that he was being watched, although he couldn't see any one. He *was* being watched. Little Joe Otter and Buster Bear were watching him and taking the greatest care to keep out of his sight.

All the way home through the Green Forest, Farmer Brown's boy kept looking behind him, and he didn't draw a long breath until he reached the edge of the Green Forest. He hadn't run, but he had wanted to.

"Huh!" said Buster Bear to Little Joe Otter, "I believe he was afraid!"

And Buster Bear was just exactly right.

THE END