

The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin

by Beatrix Potter adapted by EveryReader

Adapted to Lexile Level 200





This is a story about a tail.
The squirrel is red.
His name is Nutkin.



Nutkin has a brother.
His name is Twinkleberry.
They have many cousins.
They live in woods by a lake.



In the lake is an island.
It has trees and nut bushes.
An old owl lives there.
His name is Mr. Brown.
Everyone calls him Old Brown.



One fall, the nuts are ready.
The leaves are gold and green.
The squirrels go to the lake.



They make little boats from sticks.
They use paddles.
They sail to the island for nuts.



Each squirrel has a small bag.
Each one has a paddle.
They spread their tails like sails.



They bring three fat mice.
It is a gift for Old Brown.
They put it on his step.



Twinkleberry and the others bow.
They say, "May we pick nuts on your island?"



But Nutkin is not polite.
He hops and sings silly riddles.
Old Brown does not answer.
He closes his eyes to sleep.



The squirrels fill their bags.
They sail home at night.



Next morning they come back.
They bring a fat mole.
They ask again for more nuts.



Nutkin is rude again.
He dances and sings.
Old Brown wakes up.
He takes the mole and shuts the door.



Smoke comes from his tree.
Nutkin peeks at the door.
He sings even more.
The others gather nuts.
Nutkin plays and watches.



On the third day they go fishing.
They catch seven small fish.
They paddle to the island.



Each squirrel carries a fish.
Nutkin brings no gift.
He runs ahead and sings.
Old Brown does not care.



On the fourth day they bring beetles.
There are six fat beetles.
Each one is wrapped in a leaf.



Nutkin is still rude.
He sings and makes jokes.
He says he will give a ring.
But he has no ring.



The other squirrels hunt for nuts.
Nutkin plays with little things.



On the fifth day they bring honey.
It is sweet and sticky.
They lick their fingers.
They put the honey on a stone.



Nutkin skips and sings again.
Old Brown rolls his eyes.
He eats the honey.



The squirrels fill their bags.
Nutkin plays a game.
He rolls a crab apple.
He rolls cones like balls.



On the sixth day it is Saturday.
They come for the last time.
They bring a fresh egg.
It sits in a small basket.
It is their last gift.



Nutkin runs ahead.
He shouts a Humpty Dumpty rhyme.



Old Brown likes eggs.
He opens one eye.
Then he shuts it.
He still says nothing.



Nutkin gets ruder and ruder.
He dances and sings more.
He makes a wind sound.
He takes a running jump.
He lands on Old Brown's head.



All at once there is a rush.
There is a squeak.
The other squirrels run.
They hide in the bushes.



They peek out.
Old Brown sits on his step.
He is very still.
His eyes are closed.
It looks like nothing happened.



But Nutkin is in his pocket!



This seems like the end.
But it is not.
Old Brown carries Nutkin inside.
He holds Nutkin by the tail.



He wants to skin him.
Nutkin pulls very hard.
His tail breaks in two.



Nutkin runs up the stairs.
He jumps out a high window.
He gets away.



Even now, you may see Nutkin.
He sits high in a tree.
Do not ask him a riddle.



He will throw sticks.

He will stamp his feet.

He will shout, "Cuck-cuck-cuck-cur-r-r-cuck-k-k!"