

# Sunny Meadows Woodland School

A SCHOOL TRIP



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The sun shone brightly over the meadow as Class 1 of Sunny Meadows Woodland School set off for their first trip to the Shadow Woods.

Everyone was excited to be going on the adventure that they had been talking about for weeks. Their teacher, Miss Squirrel, had promised a trip to remember and the whole class now skipped excitedly through the meadow. Well, nearly all of the class; alone at the back of the group waddled Hank. Hank was a hedgehog who found it difficult to make friends. He always felt like the outsider. The others in the class, especially Matilda Mouse, kept away from Hank because they thought him odd. Yes, Hank was not really looking forward to the day.





The journey to the Shadow Woods was longer than expected because Mr. Mole's tunnel train was broken. Indeed Mr. Mole was there waving them off before he got back to work. This just made Miss Squirrel happier though, as she could talk to the children about all the wonderful flowers that filled Sunny Meadow. There was color everywhere. It looked as if a rainbow had crashed into the field.

However, at the edge of the meadow, not everyone was looking at the flowers...





Soon though, the Shadow Woods were upon them and something that looked small from far away suddenly grew very large before them. Each member of the class gave a slow gulp-Matilda Mouse, Rachel Rabbit, Wendy Weasel and Ralph Raccoon. The biggest gulp came from Hank. He was nervous enough before they got to the woods and didn't have a friend to hold on to. Matilda pretended to be brave, however, and ran on ahead compelling her friends to join her.



Miss Squirrel was not happy about that and so she shouted for Matilda to come back. Then off she chased after her. Soon the whole class followed and before they knew it, they were right in the middle of the woods. Now instead of bright sunshine, only shadows scattered before them.





The class stopped, their little mouths open in awe and wonder. Miss Squirrel was still chasing Matilda though and did not notice that she had left the little ones behind. Rachel Rabbit, Wendy Weasel and Ralph Raccoon all held paws as they looked around them. Three very small friends. And Hank. The only noise now in the woods was silence.





Suddenly, everyone got a fright as behind them Matilda mouse jumped from behind a berry-bush and shouted “BOO!” as loudly as she could. After they all had stopped shaking, her friends laughed. All except Hank. “Silly Hank,” said Matilda. “You are just no fun!”





However, before Hank could reply, another noise made everyone turn around. This time though there was no Boo! of surprise and no laughter afterwards because there before the class was a very large and very hungry snake. His magical eyes twinkling with delight as his tongue spiked forward. "Mmmm!! Lunchtime." said the snake.

It was at this point that the class realised that Miss Squirrel had not returned from chasing Matilda. The class was alone. Squeaks of fright squeezed out of the little animals' mouths. Matilda and her friends all hugged each other fearing that this was the end.





Suddenly though, Hank was scared no more. He found a way to save the class. He knew just what he had to do. "Quick everyone- down this hole." he shouted as he pointed to a hole under a hanging Chestnut Tree. The animals stared at him and then jumped down the hole. Hank followed only to be stopped by Matilda who looked very angry. "Hank, we are trapped now- you foolish hog." But before she could add to her insult, Hank jumped up and flipped himself into a ball. Next, he rolled towards the mouth of the hole and blocked it with his pointy sharp spikes. There would be no lunch for the snake today!



Later, back at school, Miss Squirrel was telling the head teacher, Mr Owl, about what had happened and how the snake had fled Hank's pointy spikes. After the snake had slithered away, the Class had quickly returned to school and each one had thanked their new friend Hank.

Matilda gave him a big hug and apologised for what she had called him before. Hank was not odd, he was a hero and her new best friend. Hank, who was still unused to lots of attention, turned pink and popped into a ball as all his new friends cheered him.





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