

Good Friends Don't Hide

"Bunny? Where are you?" Deer called out, searching through the bushes. Every afternoon, Deer and Bunny would head to a clearing in the forest and play games together. Today, they were playing hide and seek.

(Do you have any friends you love to play games with?)

Deer quietly moved around the clearing, looking for any signs of her friend. Deer checked the rocks. There was nothing near the rocks. Then Deer checked the grass, and found nothing but a bunch of bugs.

Bunny was a great hider, but Deer was also a great seeker. Deer decided to listen if Bunny was making any noise. Deer turned her ears to the left, then the right, listening all around for Bunny.

At first, Deer could only hear the bushes rustling and the birds chirping, but after a few moments she heard something moving inside the ground.

"That must be Bunny," she thought, "he loves hiding underground."

She went over to the nearest burrow and stuck her head inside. It only took a few moments for Bunny to run into her.

"Found you!" Deer exclaimed.

Bunny was taken by surprise and fell onto his bum with a thud. He and Deer started laughing.

"Aw, I was sure you wouldn't find me," Bunny mumbled.

"Maybe if you were a little quieter I wouldn't have found you," Deer suggested.

Bunny was about to answer when they both heard the sound of digging nearby. They looked over to see an animal searching through the nearby burrows. They were surprised by this. Usually they were the only ones at the clearing. Deer and Bunny looked at one another before moving closer to the stranger.

"Um, hello, I'm Bunny and this is my friend Deer-" Bunny could not finish before the stranger jumped in surprise.

"Sorry about jumping like that, I wasn't expecting anyone else to be here. I'm Fox." the animal introduced himself.

“Nice to meet you, Fox. What are you doing here?” Deer asked. Fox looked around to make sure nobody else was around before answering.

“I came here because this is the path to a hidden wildberry bush,” Fox answered. “They are the best I’ve ever tasted. Would you like to see?”

Deer looked unsure, but Bunny immediately perked up and agreed.

Deer wanted to talk to Bunny about Fox first about trusting Fox but Bunny was already following Fox. Since Deer could not fit into the burrow, she could only watch as her friend followed the fox into the burrow.

Deer could only wait for her friend to return. She waited, and waited, and waited, as the sun moved down into the horizon.

Meanwhile, Fox and Bunny reached the wildberry bush. Bunny tried one of the berries. It was delicious!

“Wow, Fox! This place is so awesome!” Bunny gushed.

“I know, right?” Fox said. Bunny happily ate more of the berries.

“Hey, you seem pretty fun. Wanna play some games together?” asked Fox.

“Sure! What kind of games?” Bunny answered.

“Well, I had an idea for something fun we could do...” Fox whispered.

Back at the clearing, Deer had fallen asleep but was awoken by the sound of Bunny and Fox’s laughter coming from the burrow. She wondered what they were laughing about when they started walking towards her.

Deer got up on her feet, but felt something slimy and weird on her hoof. She looked down at her hoof and saw some sticky sap that was not there before!

“Gross...” she groaned, sticking her tongue out in disgust.

Bunny and Fox bursted into laughter. She realized they had played a mean prank on her.

(Have you ever seen a mean prank being played on someone else? Has someone ever played a mean prank on you? How do you think Deer felt about the prank?)

Deer felt embarrassed, but also very hurt that her friend would do such a thing to her.

“Bunny! Why’d you do that?” Deer asked. Bunny could not answer; he was laughing too hard. Fox, through his laughter, managed to say:

“Cheer up! It’s just a prank!” But Deer did not see it that way. It did not make her laugh at all.

“Well I don’t like you pranking me like that!” Deer responded. Fox looked annoyed.

“Come on, Bunny. She’s no fun, let’s get out of here.” Bunny gave Deer a bored look before turning away and following Fox into the burrow.

Deer did not know what to do. She did not want to lose her best friend like this, but it seemed to her that Bunny was much more interested in being friends with Fox instead of her. It also seemed like Bunny was becoming more like Fox the longer they hung out with each other. She was worried that the two of them would continue to play more pranks.

(What do you think Deer should have done in this situation? Should she have talked to Bunny or accepted his new behaviour?)

Deer decided to talk to Bunny, but she did not know how. It did not seem Bunny was interested in listening. She would probably have to get Bunny away from Fox if she wanted to confront her friend.

Deer spent the rest of the day by the burrow waiting for an opportunity to talk to Bunny alone.

Suddenly, she heard digging from the burrow, and excitedly stuck her head inside to see if it was Bunny. Instead, she was surprised with a mole crashing into her face.

As night began to fall, Bunny returned from the burrow alone. Deer realized Fox must have gone home for the night. Bunny did not say anything, so Deer spoke first.

“Bunny, the prank you played on me made me feel really upset.” Deer confessed.

Bunny looked at her for a moment and blinked. He did not know what to say.

“Sorry, Deer. It was just a small prank. You don’t have to feel so bad about it.” Bunny responded.

Deer felt mad. Her friend played a mean prank on her, but Bunny thought it was not a big deal. She wanted to tell Bunny how mad she was, but remembered the games they would play together and the fun they would have. She still wanted to be his friend, and she really did not want to get in a fight with Bunny, so she decided to let go of her anger and forgive him.

“Just don’t do it again, okay?” Deer said in an annoyed voice.

“Okay.” Bunny whimpered, lowering his ears and looking down.

Deer and Bunny said good night to each other as they returned to their homes for the night.

(Do you think Bunny made a good apology? How do you think Deer felt about Bunny’s apology?)

The next day, Bunny and Deer played their usual game of hide and seek. Fox came looking for Bunny. Fox found them in the same clearing as yesterday, and he quickly went to Bunny.

“Hey Bunny, come into the burrow. I want to talk about something.” Fox said. Deer looked at Bunny in fear that Fox was planning another prank. Bunny was not as worried, and followed Fox.

Once in the burrow, Fox started whispering to Bunny:

“I was just thinking of a funny prank we can play on Deer today. Wanna hear it?” Fox whispered eagerly. But Bunny was not so sure about playing another prank on Deer. What if Deer did not give him another chance? Deer had already asked him not to play another prank on her, maybe this time she would not forgive him.

(How do you think Bunny was feeling? What choice do you think he should have made?)

Bunny chose to stand up to Fox to protect his friend.

“I’m sorry, but I was talking to Deer last night, and she said the prank we did yesterday made her feel bad. I don’t really want to make her feel like that again.” Bunny replied. Fox looked surprised. He had not thought about Deer’s feelings.

“I didn’t know that. I just wanted to have a little bit of fun with you.” Fox explained.

“So did I, but it hurt her feelings. Not only did we exclude her but we also embarrassed her. I think we both need to apologize.” Bunny suggested. Fox nodded.

“I have an idea,” Fox exclaimed. “Remember the wildberry bush? We should get her some as an apology gift since she can’t reach the bush underground.”

Bunny liked that idea. They both headed to the wildberry bush to get some berries. Once they got the berries for Deer, they went back to the clearing. When she saw them return, she was worried they were planning another prank.

Fox came closer, and offered Deer some berries. She looked down at him, confused.

“Deer, I want to say I’m really sorry. I thought I was playing a small prank, and I didn’t think about how you were feeling. I’m sorry if you felt excluded,” Fox said. Deer was happy Fox apologized to her.

“I forgive you. I’m glad you realized what you did was wrong.” Deer replied.

Then Bunny made his apology.

“Deer, we should’ve been nicer to you. We brought these berries for you because we know you can’t reach them on your own. I swear we’ll always remember to include you from now on.” Bunny promised.

(How do you think Deer was feeling when Bunny and Fox apologized? How do you think she should have responded?)

Deer felt very happy. She thought for a while, and then she cheerily shouted: “I’m going to count to ten. Hide fast!” Bunny and Fox both scurried away, looking for a place to hide. They each settled into their own hiding spot as Deer finished counting.

“Ready or not, here I come!” Deer exclaimed. Deer checked the rocks, then the grass, then the bushes, and found no sign of her friends. That meant they could only be underground. She was about to check when she suddenly heard a THUD! from underground. She immediately checked the noise by sticking her head into a burrow, and found both Bunny and Fox, who had bumped into each other while hiding in the burrows.

“Found you both!” Deer exclaimed. Bunny started laughing, and so did Deer and Fox. From then on, Deer, Fox, and Bunny would meet at the same clearing to play games every day, and they would always make sure everyone was included.

(What will you do to make sure to include all your friends in the games you play?)

The End