



The Nasty Beastie

Contributed by Anne Pitcher

I have heard many storytellers and Early Years practitioners tell this story over the years (especially working as a Nursery teacher in Early Years) and most recently I have heard it from Fife storyteller Sheila Kinninmonth. This is a tale about the wisdom of experience.

Once there was a little squirrel who lived in a beautiful wood. It was autumn and the leaves on the trees were turning yellow, red and orange. Plump, crunchy, delicious acorns, horse chestnuts and beech nuts were just perfect for nibbling and gathering in for the winter.

One day squirrel's Mum asked him to fetch some tasty nuts because she was having visitors - his Granny and Grandpa - for tea. She told him he would find the biggest, tastiest nuts on the big tree by the pond, at the edge of the woods. Being a very helpful squirrel who nearly always did what his Mum asked him to - just like you do - he set off happily towards the pond.

So he walked a little [*move hands flat on thighs in walking rhythm/on the floor*]
And he jogged a little [*move hands up and down faster*]
And he ran a little [*move hands up and down very fast*]

Not far down the road he met his friend, rabbit.

Rabbit asked squirrel where he was going. Squirrel said he was going to fetch some tasty nuts from the big tree by the pond.

Then rabbit did something that adults sometimes do when they think you're going to do something that is impossible. [*Sharp intake of breath and shake of head*]

'I wouldn't go near that pond' he said 'There's a NASTY BEASTIE in the water'

'A NASTY BEASTIE' said squirrel. 'I'm not scared of a NASTY BEASTIE!' And off he went again.

He walked a little, jogged a little, ran a little.

Until a little bit down the road he met another friend, hedgehog. Hedgehog asked where he was going. Squirrel explained. Hedgehog too, did that same something that adults sometimes do when they think something is impossible. [*Sharp intake of breath and shake of head*]

'I wouldn't go near that pond' he said. 'There's a NASTY BEASTIE in the water'

'A NASTY BEASTIE' said squirrel. 'I'm not... I'm not, really scared of a NASTY BEASTIE.' Off he went again.

He walked a little, jogged a little, ran a little.

Until a little bit down the road he met another friend, owl. Owl asked where he was going. Squirrel explained and owl did the same as his other friends.

'A NASTY BEASTIE' said squirrel. 'I'm not... I'm not really scared of a NASTY BEASTIE.'

Off he went again.

But with all his friends telling him about the NASTY BEASTIE, he was actually getting a wee bit scared so he crept along the last bit of the road to the pond and peered over the edge and looked into the pond – and something looked back at him.

'AAAHH!' screamed the squirrel

So he ran back down the road till he met owl again.

'You were right owl, there is a NASTY BEASTIE in the pond.'

'Well why don't you go back and look into the pond again and make the most horrible face you can and see if that frightens it away' said the owl

'Ok' said squirrel and off he went back to the pond.

[Practice making a really horrible face- after 3 – 1,2,3 – all make a horrible face]

He bent over and made the most horrible face he could. But the NASTY BEASTIE just made a horrible face back.

'AAAHH!' screamed the squirrel

He ran back down the road till he met hedgehog again.

'You were right hedgehog, there is a NASTY BEASTIE in the pond!'

'Well why don't you go back and look into the pond again and shake your fist at it and see if that frightens it away' suggested the hedgehog.

'Ok' said squirrel and off he went back to the pond.

He bent over and shook his fist. But the NASTY BEASTIE just shook his fist back.

'AAAHH!' screamed the squirrel

He ran back down the road till he met rabbit again.

'You were right rabbit there is a NASTY BEASTIE in the pond.' 'Well, why don't you go back and look into the pond again, get a big stick, shake it at the NASTY BEASTIE and see if that frightens it away.'

'Ok' said squirrel and off, found a big, heavy stick, and went back to the pond. He bent over and shook his stick at it. But the NASTY BEASTIE just waved a stick back.

'AAAHH!' screamed the squirrel

Squirrel ran all the way back to his mummy.

'Oh mummy I'm sorry but I didn't get the nuts. There's a NASTY BEASTIE in the pond. I'm scared. I tried making a horrible face at it and shaking my fist at it and waving a stick at it but it wouldn't go away.'

'Well' said squirrel's mummy 'Why don't you go back again and try smiling at it?' Squirrel was still a bit scared but he said he would try. Mummies usually know best. He set off again.

He walked a little, jogged a little, ran a little, all the way to the pond.

When he got near the pond, he tip-toed slowly up to it and gave the NASTY BEASTIE a very little smile. And you know what, the NASTY BEASTIE smiled back. So he tried giving it a bigger smile. And it gave him a big smile back. So he gave it a great big smile and the NASTY BEASTIE gave a great big smile back.

'It really wants to be my friend' thought the squirrel. He was so happy he didn't feel scared anymore. So he gathered the biggest, tastiest nuts and took them back to his mummy.

'Thank you, little squirrel' said his mum smiling 'What happened to the NASTY BEASTIE then? Did it smile back at you?'

'Yes' said the little squirrel 'It really just wanted to be my friend'

His mum gave him a great big hug and said 'My brave little squirrel. I love you'

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