



Jax's Tail Twitches

DAVID POWLISON
Editor

JOE HOX
Illustrator

Caspian and Jax Squirrel were sleeping soundly
until an alarm clock broke the silence.

They tumbled out of bed and raced to be
the first to slide down to the kitchen.

“Get out of my way!”
yelled Jax with his tail twitching.

Caspian just laughed as he tripped Jax
and slid down the branch to the warm kitchen.

Jax yelled again,
“It’s not funny!”
And
“I’m telling Mama!”



They arrived in the kitchen where Mama was feeding baby Jolie. Before Jax could complain, Papa came in with his paws full of acorns. A gust of wind swooped through the kitchen, tickling their tails and whiskers.

Papa said, "Today's a big day!
The acorns are finally ripe!
All paws needed to collect acorns for winter!"

Mama asked,
"How is this year's acorn supply?"

Before Papa could answer,
Jax interrupted, "How many do you think
we will get before the McNuffles steal
them?"

Everyone turned toward Jax.
Caspian said, "All squirrels know
the rules, Jax. We are only
allowed to gather from our
own tree."

Papa continued,
"Caspian is absolutely right.

I'm sure the McNuffles know the rules too.
Don't worry about them. Today all I want is to
make sure we have enough acorns for the winter."



“Well, we can’t collect on empty stomachs,”
said Mama.

So the whole family gathered around the table,
passing bowls of nuts and figs.
Jolie clapped her tiny paws together. She loved breakfast!



After finishing breakfast, Papa grabbed the burlap collection bag. He peered out the window and announced, “The sun is shining! Let’s get moving! It’s acorn-collection day!”

“Yes,” said Mama, “and I need to be back home in time to take the acorn crisp out of the oven. Don’t let me forget!”





The family scampered down their tree and quickly got to work. Papa was collecting at advanced speed, determined to fill the burlap bag to the brim. Mama gathered acorns in her apron, and Jolie chased them back and forth among leaves and twigs and little critters.

Even Caspian and Jax were gathering their fair share. At least for a little while.

Then Caspian playfully threw an acorn at his brother. Jax was not amused. "Stop!" he yelled and fired back a big handful of acorns. Caspian said, "You missed!" and "You can't get me!"

Jax took the bait, and his tail began to twitch as he ran straight toward Caspian.



Caspian flew up the Great Oak tree with Jax right behind.

They pounced and plummeted up and down the tree's trunks and branches. Caspian kept just ahead, laughing the whole time.

JAX WASN'T LAUGHING.
Caspian's always picking on me.

And
It's not fair, he thought.