

A whimsical illustration of a tree in a forest. The tree has a purple door at its base, a wooden ladder leaning against it, and a small owl perched on a branch. The background is a lush green forest with many trees and a path.

The Grumpy Old Owl

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Deep inside the forest, in a great big oak tree, there lived a very grumpy old owl.



The other animals who lived in the forest and the trees often visited the owl to say hello.
But the owl always met them with a frown.

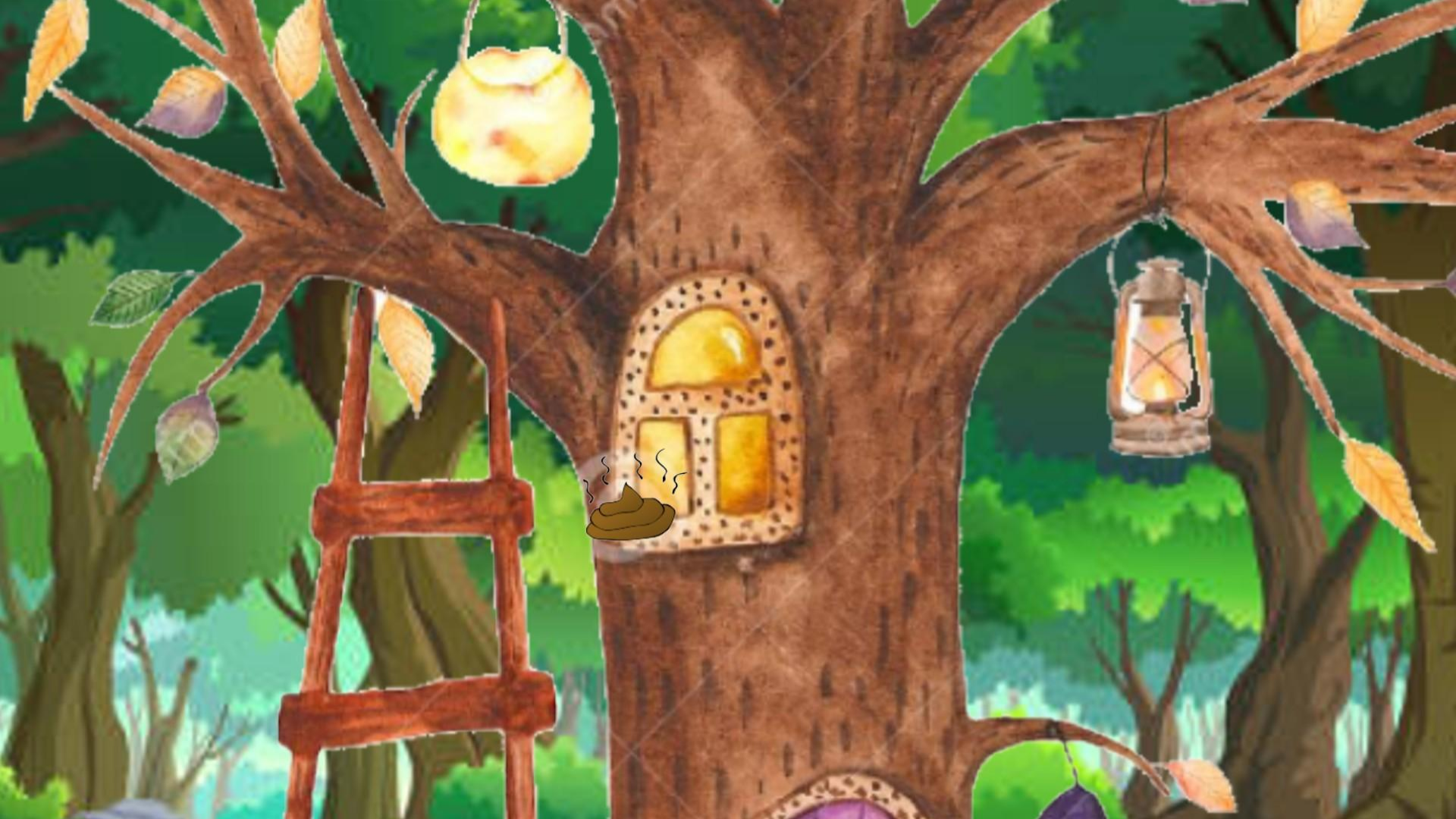


Everyone in the forest began talking about how mean the old owl was!

So, they began calling him the “Grumpy old owl”.



The other animals started making fun of him and left unwanted “presents” at his door while he slept during the day.



The Owl would see what they put when he woke up, but he just ignored them and went along with his night. But the Owl felt hurt inside because he felt like no one liked him and they didn't want to be his friend.





One morning, when the Owl had just fallen asleep, he woke up to the sound of something knocking at his door very fast. He thought they were going to **BREAK IT!**
The Owl opened the door to find a woodpecker outside hammering at the side of his door.







He yelled and yelled at the woodpecker to stop but he just kept going and could not hear the Owl over the sound of his pecking.

The Owl screeched at the top of his lungs and yelled “STOP THIS RIGHT NOW!”



Finally, the woodpecker heard him and noticed the old Owl standing at his door looking angrier than ever.

He told the owl: “Oh, excuse me Mr. Owl, I didn’t know anyone lived here. I was just pecking at this wood because I thought I could find some food inside”

The old Owl looked at him with an angry and scary face and said: “Go find somewhere else to peck for food! You were going to poke a hole through my living room! And you’re disrupting my sleep. Do you know how late it is for an owl to be up at this time of day!”



I'm sorry Mr. Owl I didn't mean to wake you up." Said the woodpecker, "But I would advise you to do something about your walls, they are very old and dry".

"OF COURSE, THEYRE OLD AND DRY!" replied the Owl furiously, **"IVE BEEN LIVING HERE FOR TEN YEARS AND IT'S ALMOST THE END OF WINTER!"**

"I better not see you here again or next time I won't be so easy on you!"

continued the Owl, **"NOW LEAVE MY PROPERTY!"**



The woodpecker flew as fast as he could, scared of the owl and what he was going to do to him. “He’s a really grumpy old owl!” thought the woodpecker while he flew through the trees and away from the Owl’s house.



A few weeks later, the weather began to clear up. The clouds cleared to reveal the light blue sky and sun came out while the flowers and trees started blooming again. A young squirrel came out of her house in the great big oak tree and stood on a branch high up in the tree so she can breathe in the fresh spring air.



“Ah, it’s finally spring again” said the Squirrel, “I hate the cold weather in winter!”.

Then the Squirrel felt hungry and went looking through the tree for some freshly grown acorns to snack on.



While climbing up the great oak tree, the Squirrel saw the old Owl on the branch outside his house and wanted to say hello before he goes in to sleep for the day.
The Owl was dozing off while sitting on his branch so he didn't see the Squirrel climbing up the tree.



The Squirrel went up to the owl and noticed that he was sleeping. This didn't stop her from jumping onto the branch and saying "GOOD MORNING MR OWL!" in a very loud voice. The old Owl suddenly woke up, scared, and confused, and turned around to find the Squirrel next to him. He looked at her with angry eyes and a frowning face and yelled

"WHAT THE HECK DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!".



The Squirrel looked at him and laughed with a big smile on her face.

“I was just trying to tell you good morning but you were falling asleep on the branch!” she said.

“I NEARLY HAD A HEART ATTACK!” said the Owl.

The Squirrel laughed and laughed until she cried, and the Owl stood there looking at her with his grumpy face. He was very angry.



The following mornings, after the Squirrel came out of her house to search for food, she would go and say hello to the Owl every day before he went to sleep.

The Squirrel did this because the Owl was her neighbor in the great oak tree, and she believed that he was kind, but he was grumpy because he needed a friend who was nice to him.



The Squirrel was a very sweet and friendly and always saw the best in everyone.

Even though every animal in the forest thought that the Owl was very mean and didn't like talking to him, the Squirrel didn't listen to what they said about him and wanted to be his friend. She really liked laughing and joking with him even though he ends up yelling at her. She thought that was very funny.



One day, the Squirrel was doing what she always does and saying good morning to the Owl while going to get her food. The Owl stops her and says “Why are you always so nice to me? Why are you not afraid of me like the other animals? No one ever tells me good morning every day and is nice to me like you.” The Squirrel smiled at the old Owl and told him “You’re my neighbor, of course I’m going to be nice to you and tell you good morning. It’s rude not to. And I’m nice to you because I want to be your friend.”

“My what?! I can’t hear you! I’m hard of hearing in my right ear!” said the old Owl



“YOUR FRIEND!” shouted the Squirrel into his left hear.

“OKAY I HEARD YOU! YOU DON’T NEED TO MAKE MY OTHER EAR HARD OF HEARING TOO!” yelled the Owl.

Then he calmed down and said: **“You want to be my friend?! No one ever wants to be my friend! Is this another one of your pranks? Are you making fun of me like they all do?”**

“No of course not! I would never make fun of you like that!” replied the Squirrel, **“I really do want to be your friend!”**

The owl looked at her with a frown, unsure if he should trust her or not, and went inside his house to sleep through the day.





The next morning, the Squirrel woke up early to the sound of something hammering very rapidly at her door. When she opened it, she found the Woodpecker, pecking at the outside of her wall.

“OH! GOOD MORNING MR. WOODPECKER!” said the Squirrel at the top of her lungs.



The Woodpecker stopped, thinking it was the owl shouting at him again. He turned his head slowly and saw the Squirrel standing next to him.

“I thought you were the grumpy old Owl that lives in this tree!” said the Woodpecker relieved, “I thought he was going to shout at me again!”

“No Mr. Owl lives a few branches above me.” Said the Squirrel “But he is really nice if you get to know him!”

“Really nice?” replied the Woodpecker, “I don’t think someone who is ‘really nice’ would shout at me for trying to find some food.”

“Well, you were pecking outside his door and woke him up so he might have been a bit mean to you, but it’s only because he hates to be woken up before nighttime.” Explained the Squirrel.



“Don’t make excuses for him.” Said the Woodpecker, “I know he’s mean because all the other animals also talk about how mean he is. That’s why they call him the ‘Grumpy Old Owl’”.

“it’s not nice to call others names like that, and you don’t even know him” replied the Squirrel.

“Why do you keep defending him? I don’t think he has any friends so I’m going to assume that you are not his friend either, right?” said the Woodpecker.

“Actually, I am his friend” replied the Squirrel, upset that people were being mean to the old Owl. “And if any of you tried being nice to Mr. owl, you would see that he’s not that bad, he just needs friends who are nice and kind to him. All of you just make fun of him so how would you know how he is with animals who are nice to him?” said the Squirrel.

The Woodpecker stood there not knowing what to say and just flew away through the branches and way from the great oak tree, while the Squirrel went back inside her house to finish her nap.





The next morning, when the squirrel was climbing up the tree to gather up her acorns, the Owl opened his door and came out of his house, greeting her with a wave saying “Good morning, Squirrel! How are you today?”

The squirrel looked up in shock and replied “Good morning Mr. Owl! I’m good how are you?”

“I’m very well” the Owl said with a smile, “I just wanted to thank you for what you said yesterday to that Woodpecker, I couldn’t help but overhear your conversation when I came out of my house because of the noise he was making.”



“Oh, you heard that?” replied the Squirrel, “Yes well he was being extremely rude, so I had to say something to him”.

“I appreciate it.” Said the Owl, “Well I’ll see you later, friend!” he said as he went inside and closed his door.

The Squirrel was shocked at what he said. He finally accepted her as a friend! She was very happy that she jumped up the tree to collect her acorns.



From that day on, the old Owl and the Squirrel started being friends and said good morning to each other every day, and even helped each other gather food. The Owl would help the Squirrel gather her acorns, and the Squirrel would help the owl catch wood mice for him to eat whenever she found some.

When the other animals in the forest started seeing the Owl being friends with the Squirrel, they started trying to be nice to him and became his friends and stopped calling him “The Grumpy Old Owl”.



The End

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