



June Rings the Bell



The sun was setting, and the summer banquet was ready on the hilltop. June the monkey and Ned the bear cub had worked on it all day. They had set a long table with a red velvet cloth.



There was a napkin by every plate and a basket of muffins in the middle. Ned had even baked a walnut cake and tied a yellow ribbon around it. "It is time to ring the dinner bell," said Ned.



"Our friends are still down in the valley." The bell was high on the barn, next to the brick chimney. June ran to pull the rope, but the rope was gone! It had snapped off, and now it lay in the grass like a long, thin snake.



Ned got the ladder from the shed and set it by the barn wall. He went up step by step until he stood at the top. He reached as high as he could, but the bell was still far above his paw. "The ladder is too short," he said sadly.



"And nobody will hear us yell from up here. This was not meant to be a picnic for two!" June looked at the bell, and then she looked at the chimney. The bricks stuck out a little, just like steps. "I can climb that," she said.



"I could win a climbing contest in my sleep!" She put on her helmet, buttoned her jacket, and tucked a hammer into her belt. Up she went, hand over hand, sticking to the bricks like glue. Once her foot slipped, and Ned yelled from down below. An insect buzzed past her ear.



But June held on tight, took a deep breath, and kept going. At the top, she hit the bell with the hammer. Bang, bang, bang! She tapped out a loud, happy tune, and the sound rolled down the hill and across the valley. Soon their friends came running up the path.



A rabbit hopped ahead, and a small kitten ran behind him. Everyone clapped as June climbed back down. Ned gave her the first muffin and the biggest slice of cake. "That was the best dinner bell I ever heard," said Ned. June grinned and took a big bite.