



Slime Time

WRITTEN BY KATHY KRANKING ■ ILLUSTRATED BY CHRISTIAN SLADE

It was a cool evening. Ricky Raccoon and his pals were hanging out at the edge of the woods near Sunny Meadow.

“Hey, look at this,” said Flora Skunk. She was pointing to a big, flat rock on the ground. “This rock is covered with shiny lines.”

“I know what that is,” said Ricky. “It’s dried slime!”

“*Ew!*” said Bizzie Beaver. “You mean someone sneezed on it?”

Ricky giggled. “No, silly. It’s slime from snails. When snails crawl along, they leave slime trails.”

Mitzi Mink crouched down to look more closely at the rock. “Wow! There sure are a lot of trails. It looks like a snail raceway!”

“That gives me an idea,” said Bizzie. “Let’s try to find some snails. Then we can have a snail race.”

So the pals peeked under leaves, rocks, and logs. Soon Ricky, Flora, and Mitzi each found a snail.

“Bizzie,” called Ricky, “have you found your racer?”



“Sure have,” Bizzie said with a happy grin. He held out his paw. But he didn’t have a snail. He was holding a tiny inchworm!

“This is Inchy,” Bizzie said excitedly.

“Bizzie,” said Flora, “you can’t enter an inchworm in a snail race.”

Bizzie’s face fell. “Why not?”

“He’s too fast,” said Mitzi. “It wouldn’t be fair.”

“Well, I couldn’t find a snail,” said Bizzie. “And Inchy really wants to be in the race.” Then Bizzie thought a minute. “I know,” he said. “What if Inchy gives the snails a head start?”

Ricky, Flora, and Mitzi decided that would be OK.

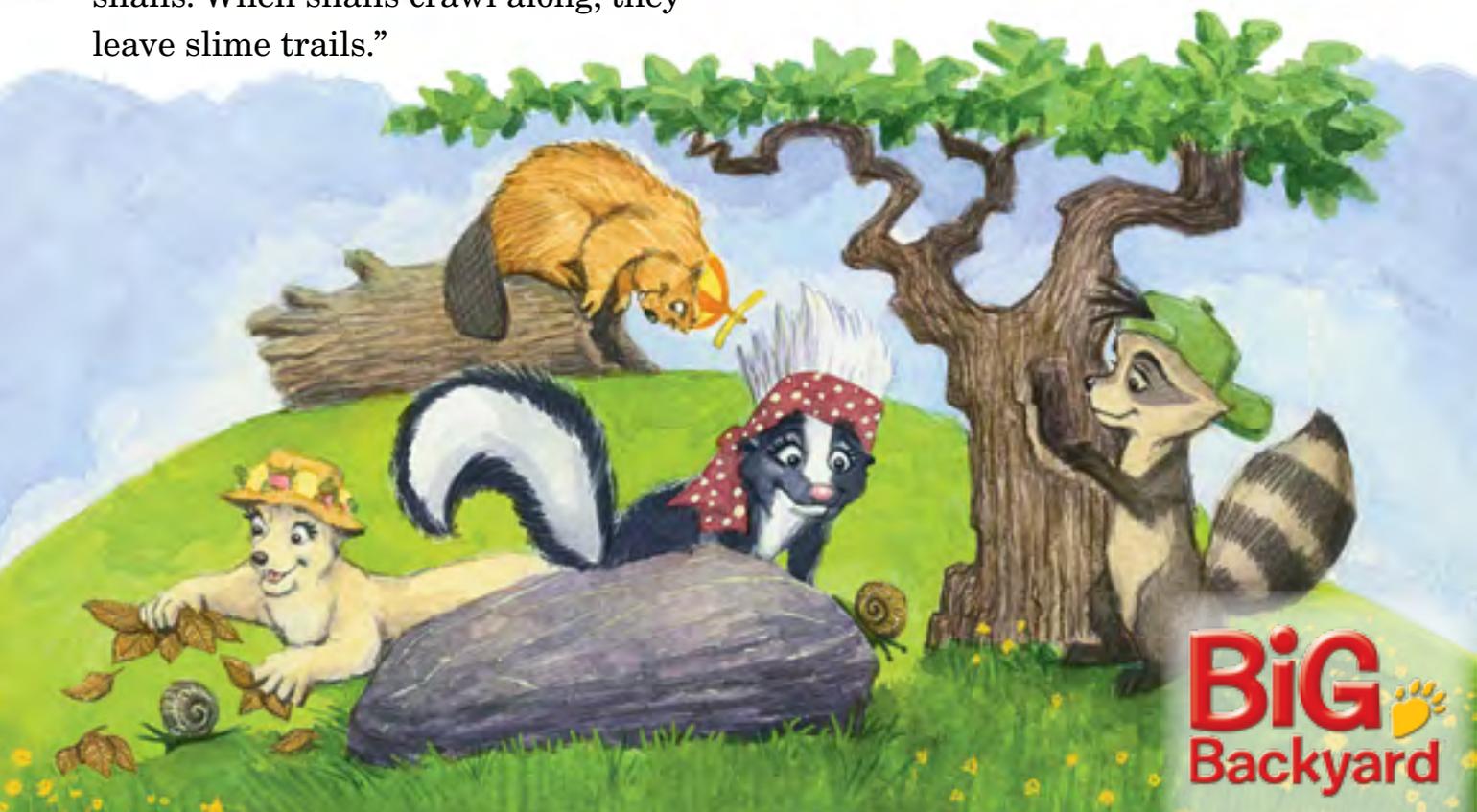
Flora watched her snail crawl across her paw. “I’m going to call my snail Speedy,” she said. “Just look at him go!”

“Sorry,” said Ricky, “but my Lightning is going to slime circles around Speedy! Aren’t you, Lightning?” he asked, as the little snail climbed up his finger.

“Well, Rocket is going to blast past all of you!” exclaimed Mitzi with a giggle.

“Let’s use the rock as our racetrack,” said Ricky.

The friends placed a stick near the edge of the rock for a starting line. Then they put a blade of grass down for the finish line.



“OK,” Ricky said, “On your mark . . .”

“You can do it, Speedy,” said Flora.

“Get set . . .” said Ricky.

“Go get ’em, Rocket!” said Mitzi.

“Go!” cried Ricky, and the friends all set their racers down on the rock.

Bizzie put Inchy at the starting line, while the others put the snails a couple of inches ahead of him.

“The race is on!” exclaimed Flora. As the friends watched, Lightning slowly moved forward. Inchy started to inch along, too, but then turned to the left.

“No, Inchy. That’s the wrong way!” Bizzie moaned.

Soon Speedy glided up next to Lightning. But Rocket had pulled inside his shell and wasn’t moving at all.

“Rocket,” groaned Mitzi, “what are you doing? Giddy-up, fella!” But Rocket stayed still.

Ricky laughed. “Looks like Rocket ran out of fuel,” he said.

Meanwhile, Inchy continued to inch along the wrong way and then crawled down the side of the rock.

“Oh, well,” Bizzie said. “I guess Inchy didn’t want to race with a bunch of slimy snails.”

Meanwhile, Lightning and Speedy had almost reached the blade of grass that marked the finish line. Suddenly, Lightning turned and began to crawl along next to the finish line.

“No, Lightning, you have to cross the finish line!” moaned Ricky.

“And Speedy wins!” exclaimed Flora, as Speedy slowly crawled across the blade of grass. “He’s the champ!”

Mitzi took the blade of grass and put it in front of Rocket’s shell. “Aw, Rocket,” she said. “You were supposed to be crawling to this!” As she spoke, Rocket poked his head out of his shell. After a second or two, he began to nibble on the blade of grass.

“Oh, I see,” said Mitzi with a giggle. “Rocket didn’t want to cross the finish line. He wanted to eat it!”

