



Buried Treasure

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Ricky Raccoon and Flora Skunk were standing beneath a rainbow. But it wasn't the kind of rainbow that comes with the rain.

"It's a rainbow of colorful fall leaves!" exclaimed Ricky. He and Flora were looking up into the trees. The leaves were pretty shades of red, yellow, and orange. A red leaf came fluttering down toward them and landed on Ricky's head. As he giggled, more leaves came drifting down.

"Let's try to catch them," said Flora.

"OK!" said Ricky. They ran around grabbing the falling leaves.

"Got one!" said Flora as she caught an orange one.

"I got a yellow one," said Ricky.

Looking down, Ricky saw that a really pretty orange-red leaf had landed on a big log. As he reached down to pick it up, a black boot appeared next to the leaf. Ricky looked up to see Bizzie Beaver. He was dressed as a pirate.

"Ahoy, mateys!" Bizzie said. "That's pirate talk," he added.

"Hi, Bizzie," said Ricky. "Why are you wearing your pirate costume? Halloween is still two weeks away."

Bizzie grinned his toothy beaver grin. "I know, but I couldn't wait," he said. "Want to play pirate?"

"OK," said Ricky and Flora.

"Great!" said Bizzie. He hopped onto the log. "This can be our pirate ship."

Ricky and Flora hopped on the log.

"Let's pretend we're sailing to a desert island," said Bizzie. "Then we can dig for buried treasure."



"*Hmmm*," said Ricky, "I wonder where we can find some treasure."

"Let's all dig in different spots and see if anyone finds anything," said Bizzie.

They each found a stick to use as a shovel. Then they began to dig.

"I'm not finding anything but dirt," said Flora.

"Same here," said Ricky.

"I found something," exclaimed Bizzie. He picked up a small round object. "Well, it's not treasure," he said. "It's just an acorn."

"How would an acorn get buried like that?" asked Ricky.

As the three stared at the acorn looking puzzled, they heard a flutter of wings. Their friend Mrs. Cardinal landed on Bizzie's shoulder. "Hello, everyone," she said cheerfully.

"Hi, Mrs. C," they all answered.

Bizzie held up the acorn. "We were digging for buried treasure," he said. "And I found this."

"You've discovered a squirrel's winter snack!" said Mrs. C.

"What do you mean?" asked Flora.

"In the fall, squirrels gather acorns and bury them," said Mrs. C. "When winter comes, they dig up the acorns and eat them."

"Hey, look!" said Ricky. He pointed and they all turned. A little ways away, a squirrel was busily digging a hole.

"That squirrel must be storing food for winter," Flora said.

Bizzie looked at the acorn in his paw. "You know what?" he said. "I think I'd better put this back where I found it."

"Yes," agreed Ricky. "This winter it will be a snack for a hungry squirrel."

Bizzie put the acorn carefully back into the hole he had dug. Then Ricky and Flora helped him cover it with dirt. They all patted it down.

"There," said Bizzie. "Safe and sound."

"Hey, I just thought of something," said Ricky. "The acorns that squirrels bury can help them make it through the winter. So they're really valuable."

"You're right, Ricky," said Bizzie. "I guess I really did find buried treasure after all, mateys!"

