



# On Its Way

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Ricky Raccoon woke up shivering. “Why is it so cold?” he wondered.

He lay in bed, yawning. Then he realized something. It was quiet, too quiet. The bird that sang him awake each morning wasn’t singing.

Ricky peeked out his window. The branch where he usually saw the bird was empty. “That’s strange,” thought Ricky. “Things seem different this morning.”



Then Ricky heard a knock at his door. He opened it to find Bizzie Beaver, Flora Skunk, and Mitzi Mink.

“Come on, Ricky,” said Flora. “We’re going to play at the old bridge.”

“OK, that sounds fun,” said Ricky. And off they went.

The friends walked along, cracking jokes and giggling. Suddenly their giggles were drowned out by a loud noise above them.

When they looked up, the friends saw a large flock of geese flying. The birds formed two lines that made a “V” shape. And the geese were honking like crazy!

“Wow, I’ve never seen so many geese flying together,” said Bizzie. “I wonder where they’re going.”

“That’s another thing that’s different,” Ricky thought to himself. “What’s going on?”

Soon the gang arrived at the old bridge. They liked to go there to watch the creek flow slowly underneath and to play games.



“What game should we play today?” asked Flora.

“We could have a pebble-throwing contest,” suggested Mitzi.

“We did that last week,” said Bizzie. “How about the dropping game?”

“Yeah, I love that game,” said Ricky.

To play the dropping game, the friends needed to collect things to drop into the creek. “Let’s drop leaves today,” said Bizzie.

Everyone began looking for leaves. Ricky picked up a bright yellow leaf.



Flora found a red one. Bizzie picked up an orange leaf. Mitzi's leaf was red and orange.

"When did the leaves fall off the trees?" Ricky wondered as he walked back onto the bridge. It was another thing that was different.

The four friends held their leaves over the railing of the bridge.

"Ready . . . set . . . go!" shouted Flora, and they dropped their leaves. Down, down the leaves swirled until they landed in the water.

The pals watched eagerly as the leaves began to drift. "Look at mine!" exclaimed Bizzie, pointing at his orange leaf. "It's first!"

The leaves headed downstream and disappeared under the bridge. The friends ran to the other side of the bridge to wait. After a few seconds, all the leaves appeared except for Ricky's yellow one.

"Mine's still first," said Bizzie. "I win!"

"Wait a minute," said Ricky. "My leaf is missing!" The friends watched and waited. But no yellow leaf appeared.

"I'll go look for it," said Ricky. He ran off the bridge and scrambled underneath it.

Ricky's leaf was caught on a stick. He loosened it and watched it float off. "Thanks for losing me the race, you silly leaf!" he said.

As he headed up the creek bank, Ricky heard a rustling noise. He looked around and saw a squirrel digging near some bushes. The squirrel had an acorn in its mouth. As Ricky watched, the squirrel buried the acorn. Then it scampered away.



Ricky headed back to his friends. He still felt as if there was something he was supposed to remember. Then all of a sudden, it hit him.

"The chilly morning, the missing songbird, the geese in a 'V,' the fallen leaves, a squirrel storing food . . . now I know what's going on," said Ricky. "Winter's on its way!"

