

The Helpful Beaver

Brenda was a young beaver. She lived with her family in a lodge made of sticks and mud. It was a cozy house in the middle of a large pond, but it was getting too small. Brenda had older brothers who were ready to build lodges. Everyone in Brenda's family was helping to build a nice, new home.

Brenda watched her older brothers swim to the pond's edge to chew on small trees. They bit through the bark with their powerful jaws and kept gnawing. They didn't eat the wood. They used their teeth as tools to chop down the tree. It was slow, but eventually Brenda's brothers would slap their wide tails on the water as the tree fell down.

The rest of the beaver family used the logs and sticks to build a new house. Beavers are very good builders, and they made the walls of their new house so thick that no other animals could get inside. Only the beavers knew that there was a secret door hidden under the water.

"Can I help you build the new lodge?" asked Brenda.

"You're too small to cut down trees," her brother laughed. "And I bet you're too small to drag the trees all the way across the pond to the lodge too."

Brenda was still very small because she was the youngest beaver in her family. But she still wanted to help.

Brenda looked around. All the trees seemed very big, and her teeth were still smaller than her brothers'. She swam to the edge of the pond. Here she noticed the ground was very soft. Thick mud squished up around her paws.

Brenda wiggled her webbed feet in the mud. When she lifted her paw, she found she could carry the mud around. "I'll help put the mud on the sticks to make the walls strong!" Brenda said.

So Brenda swam back and forth all day, bringing as much mud as she could to the new lodge. She packed the mud into the gaps between logs and sticks to make solid walls for the new house.

"That is wonderful," said Brenda's mother. "Thank you for helping us build our new lodge. When we work together, we get things done much faster."

Brenda smiled. She was very glad to help her family, and she was proud to be a real builder, just like her brothers.

Questions

1. According to the story, what is a beaver lodge?
2. How do beavers cut down trees?
3. How does Brenda help her family?
4. What is the moral or the theme of this story?