

A Squirrel's Tale Teaching Notes



A SQUIRREL'S TALE

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY

Debs Pharoah Pink



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Published by Little Steps Publishing

SYNOPSIS

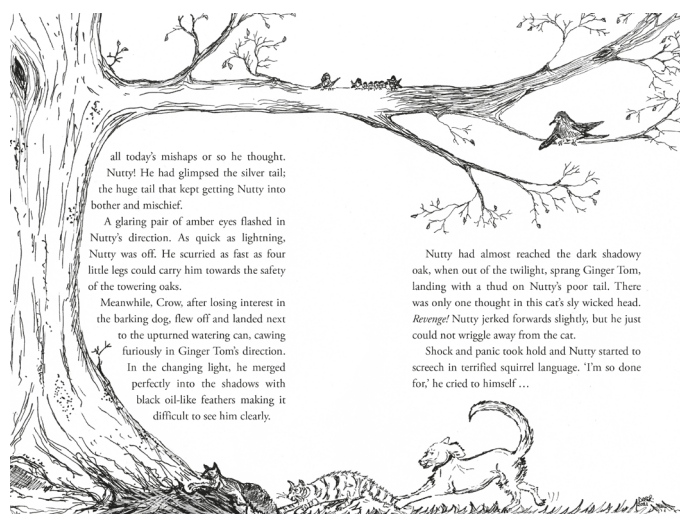
Have you ever wondered what a cat might be thinking ... or perhaps a wild grey squirrel? During a wet autumnal day, you get to find out exactly that. It's a very eventful afternoon, packed with silly ideas and comical mishaps – from scary washing lines to unfortunate pond dipping and failed fishing to a sinking watering can. With embarrassing rescues, a playful dog and a few sore noses and tails for good measure, Ginger Tom and Nutty the Squirrel's story is a terrific tale to be told.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

Debs is passionate about wildlife and nature. Having joined the online Self-Isolating Bird Club, started by Chris Packham in March 2020, she found a welcome platform for her nature poems. She's written poetry since her early teens on many subjects and tried her hand at storytelling too. Spending many years as a primary school teaching assistant supporting children with dyslexia and dyscalculia, the ideas just kept coming. *A Squirrel's Tale* is her debut book and hopefully the beginning of an exciting new adventure. Dabbling in drawing and amateur photography are two more passions and Debs wanted to illustrate her story herself, using her favourite art medium, pencil and fine line pen. She lives in a beautiful corner of Dorset with her husband and Dexter the dog and they have four grown up children and two grandsons. As well as the shared family cats, Ginger, Ninja, Gazza and Yoshi, they share their garden with a fox, badgers, squirrels, birds and many other fascinating creatures.

EDUCATIONAL APPLICABILITY

A Squirrel's Tale is a delightful animal tale starring Nutty the Squirrel and Ginger Tom and the adventures they get up to on a wet autumnal day. As well as being a fun story, this book is a wonderful educational resource with word challenges for developed readers as well as being a lovely bedtime story for younger children. With some resources at the back of the book (activities, wildlife spotting and facts), children will be engaged for hours! A timely book to connect children to outside spaces and nature in a humorous way, complete with playful illustrations by the author.

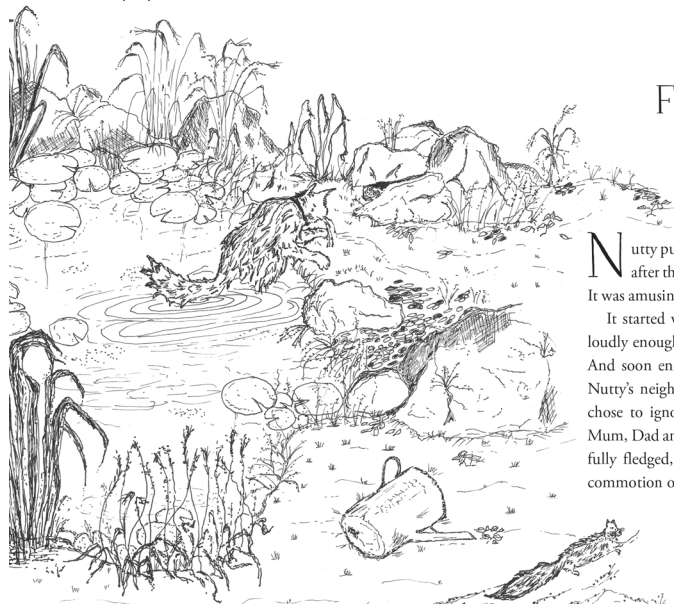


DISCUSSION TOPICS

Read the book together, asking questions throughout.

1. Look at the cover of the book together. What do you think the story might be about?
2. Ask the children to talk about what's in their garden. What do they like/dislike? Do they have a wildlife area, trees, a pond, etc.? If they don't have a garden, what is their favourite outside space? What wildlife do they see in their garden/favourite outdoor space? How can they make a more wildlife-friendly space?
3. What was Nutty's birthday party like? What did Mr Robin think of Nutty's stories?
4. Discuss what happened in the story to make Ginger Tom really cross. Why didn't any of Tom's horrid plans work out? How do you feel when someone is mean?
5. When Nutty saw Tom running towards him in the garden, how do you think he felt? Have you ever felt brave or very scared? Why?
6. Why did Nutty's tail cause the young squirrel so much trouble?
7. How did Tom feel, stuck in the tree? What happened next?
8. How did Tom pay back the human for laughing at him? Was he a kind cat? What would you do if someone helped you?
9. Which season do you like best – spring, summer, autumn or winter? Why is it your favourite?
10. Make a nature collage or go on an autumn treasure hunt. Find 10 different items to collect, for example, an acorn cup, colourful leaf, seed head, things with interesting patterns and shapes, etc.
11. What did the children think of the book? If they liked it, why did they like it? What was their favourite part?

Seconds later, he caught a strong whiff of Nutty scent. Then he saw him. Well at least the top half of him anyway.



CHAPTER SIX FEATHERS, FINS AND FISHING

Nutty pulled out the memory of what followed after this strange sight of cat, dog and squirrel. It was amusing now, just not at the time!

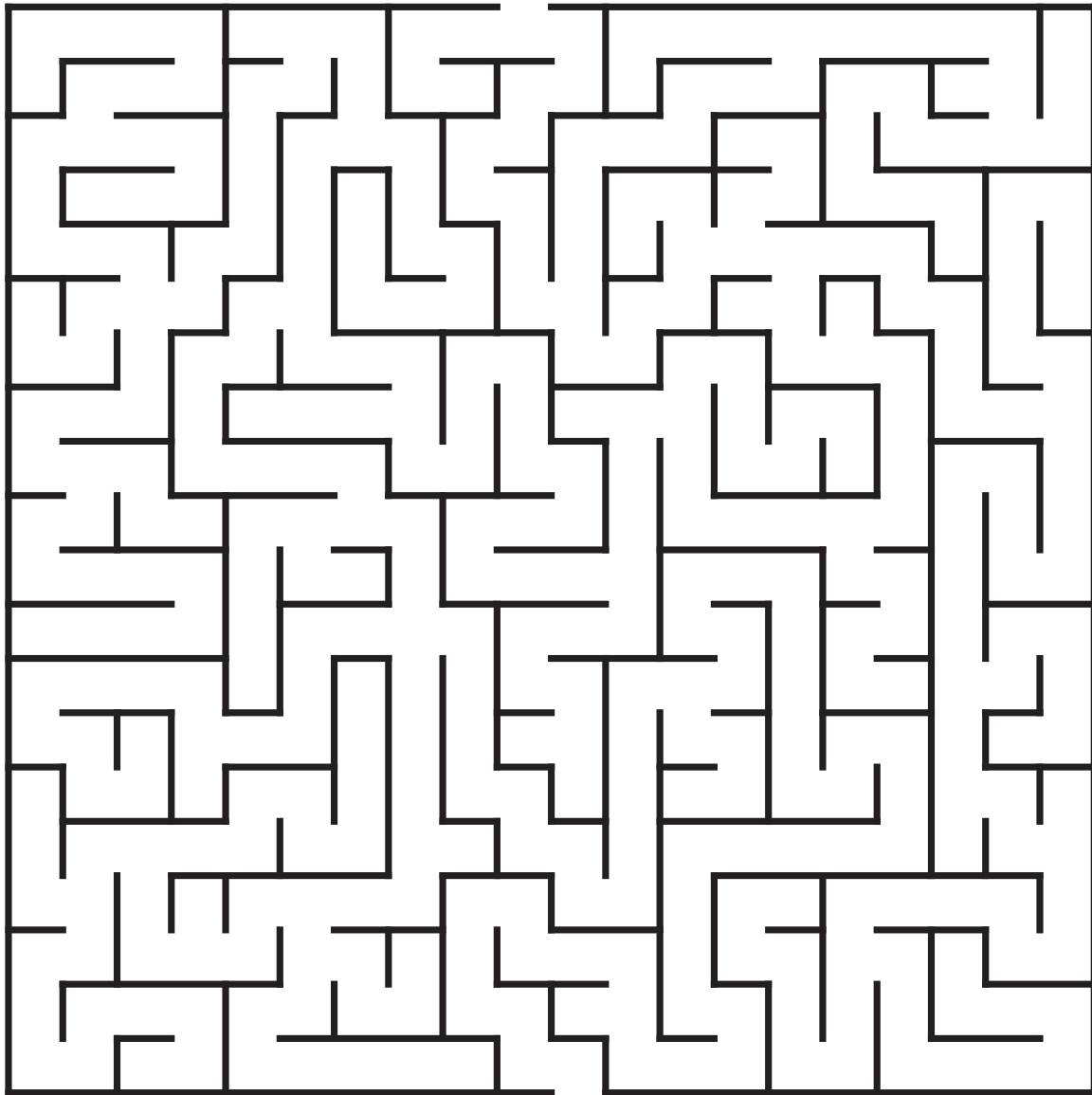
It started with Black Lab, howling and barking loudly enough for the entire lane of houses to hear. And soon enough it disturbed the wild residents, Nutty's neighbours, even though the human ones chose to ignore the noise. The blue tit family of Mum, Dad and their five late summer babies almost fully fledged, Red Robin and Crow all heard the commotion over by the pond.

A-MAZE-ING NUTTY

Help Nutty escape from Ginger Tom!



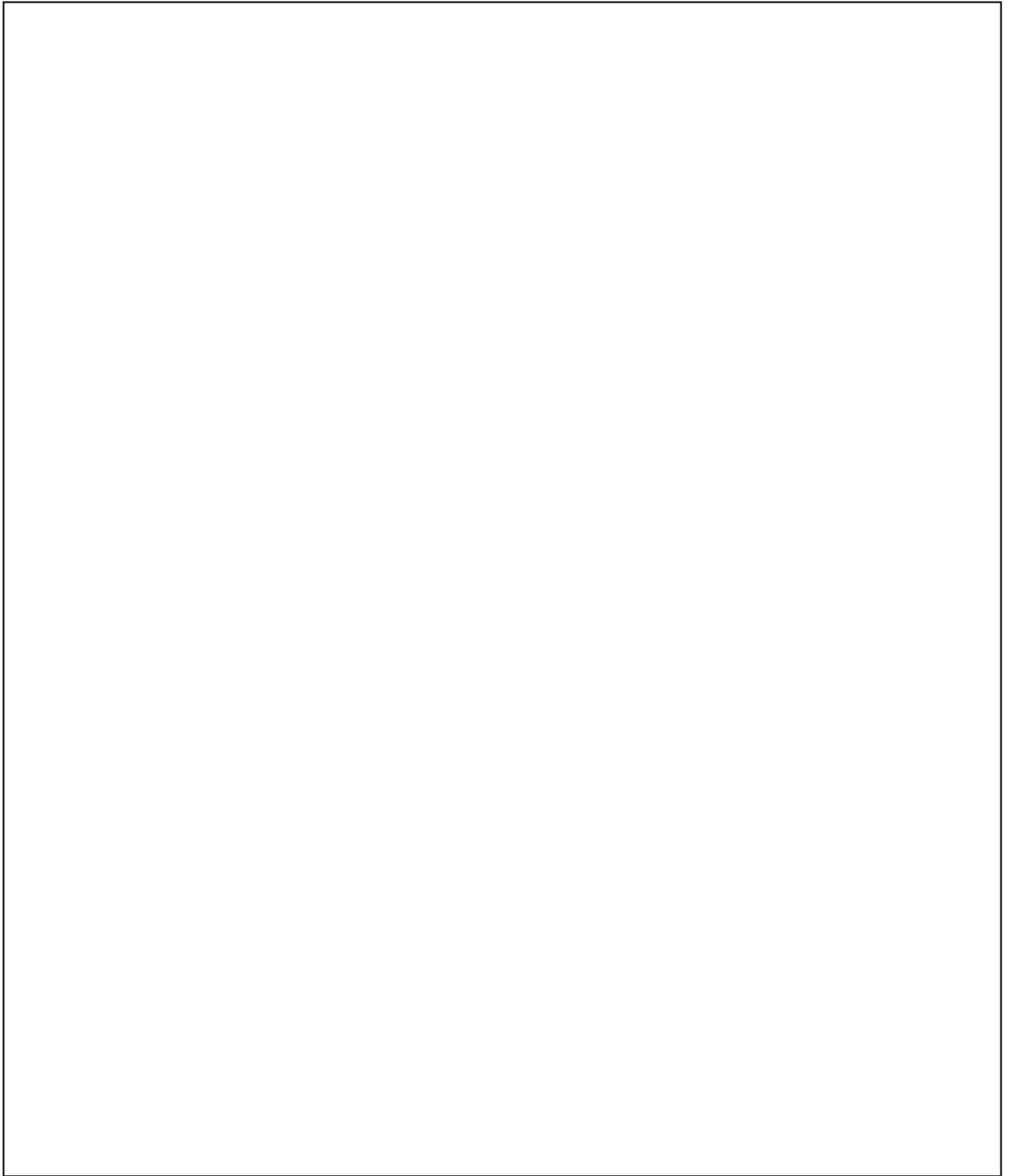
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FINISH here

WILDLIFE WINDOW

Draw a picture from your window. What wildlife can you see?



ACROSTIC POEM

Write an acrostic poem using the word SQUIRREL. An acrostic poem is a poem in which the first letter of each line spells out a word. You could write about all the different things Nutty gets up to in the book or everything you know about squirrels.

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