Listen Buddy
By: Helen Lester

Buddy’s father had a beautiful big nose. He was a great sniffer.

Buddy’s mother had beautiful big teeth. She was a great chomper.

Buddy had beautiful big ears. It didn’t matter.

When Buddy’s parents sent him to the vegetable stand to get a basket of squash, he came home with a basket of wash. When they asked him to buy fifteen tomatoes, he came home with fifty potatoes.

Buddy’s father said, “Listen, Buddy, will you please bring me a pen?”

“Who?” asked Buddy. “You,” said his father. “Will you please bring me a pen?”

“A what?” asked Buddy. “A pen,” said his father “will you please bring me a pen?”

“Sure,” said Buddy. Buddy’s father said, “Listen, Buddy!” (Buddy brings in a hen)

Buddy’s mother said, “Listen, Buddy, will you please bring me a slice of bread?”

“Who?” asked Buddy. “You,” said his mother. “Will you please bring me a slice of bread?”

“A what?” asked Buddy. “A slice of bread,” said his mother “will you please bring me a slice of bread?”

“Sure,” said Buddy. Buddy’s mother said, “Listen, Buddy!” (Buddy has slice his bed in two)

Somehow Buddy’s mind was always wandering too far away from those beautiful ears. His parent tried yelling. “LISTEN, BUDDY!” They tried whispering. “Listen, Buddy.” Nothing worked.

One day Buddy got permission to go for a long hop. He had never before been allowed to go beyond the vegetable stand. “Listen, Buddy,” his parents warned him. “Just remember that at the end of the road, there are two paths. The path to the left will lead you around the pond back home. But the path to the right will lead you to the cave of the Scruffy Varmint. And that Scruffy Varmint has a nasty temper, so be sure to take the path to the left."

“Right?” asked Buddy.

“Left,” said his parents.

Typed by: Ginny Love
“Right!” said Buddy. And with the salute of his paw he hopped away.

Feeling very grown-up, Buddy hopped alone, past the vegetable stand and on to the end of the road. “Now let’s see,” he pondered. “Was I supposed to go left or right?” “Or right?” “Or left?” He thought as hard as he could. “The last thing that I said was ‘Right!’ so that must be…. Right.” Right he went.

Twenty-five hops later, Buddy discovered that right was wrong. There in front of his cave was the Scruffy Varmint, doing scruffy things that varmints do, like snarling, mussing his hair, rubbing dirt on his knees, and scratching a whole lot of itches. At his feet was a large soup pot.

“What are you going to do with that soup pot?” asked Buddy.


Buddy had forgotten his parent’s warning about the Scruffy Varmint. He asked eagerly, “May I help?” The scruffy Varmint was not fond of having company, but with help he’d have his soup sooner, so he said, “All right, Bunnysrabit, come help me gather firewood.” “Who, what?” asked Buddy. “You. Firewood,” Buddy eagerly hopped ahead of the Scruffy Varmint. Very gently he gathered a large prickly bundle, which he held out proudly. Roughly the Varmint grabbed the bundle. “I said firewood, not briarwood,” he yelped, plucking the sharp thorns from his paws.

Later, when the pot was filled with water, the Scruffy Varmint lay against a rock, liking his paws and barking orders. “Hustle, Bunnysrabit. Get the flour.” “Yessir!” said Buddy. (Buddy gets flowers)

“Five pinches of salt.” (Buddy gets 5 inches)

“Fifteen tomatoes.”

“Yessir!” said Buddy. (Buddy gets 50 potatoes)