

Mrs. Owl's
FOREST SCHOOL

THE VERY BIG DEN



Illustrated by **Seb Braun**

A story
to share &
activities
to try!

"Today, we're going to build a den!" says Mrs Owl.

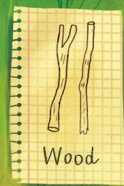


"What's a den?"
says Rabbit.



"It's a shelter, made of things we find in the forest.
We'll need wood, leaves, grass and a coil of rope."

Mrs Owl holds up some rope.
"That's one thing off our list,"
she smiles. "But can you help
me find everything else?"



The animals set off into the woods,
looking carefully at the ground around them.



What can you see on the ground? Can you see any creepy crawlies among the branches?

First, the friends need to gather logs and branches for their den.
There are so many different shapes and sizes!



"Your branches should be as tall as me," says Mrs Owl.
"Try to find ones with forked ends."

"I found one!"
Fox cries.

"This one looks like a wand!"
giggles Rabbit.

"I'm too little," sniffs Mouse,
but nobody hears.



Squirrel starts to
clamber up a tree.

"Wait!" says Mrs Owl.
"We can only use branches that have
fallen off the trees already."

"Look carefully at the trees," says Mrs Owl.
"Can you see how they're all different?"

MRS OWL'S GUIDE TO TREES

Trees come in lots of different shapes.
Here are some to look out for:



OAK

Oak leaves have
a distinctive
wibbly edge.

HORSE CHESTNUT

These leaves look
a bit like hands
with five fingers.



BEECH

These are oval,
glossy leaves with
saw-toothed edges.



WHITE ASH

Leaves have a tight
pattern of veins and
grow in groups.



Soon the animals have gathered a big pile of branches.
"Wonderful," says Mrs Owl. "Let's get started!"



Working as a team, the friends prop two long sticks into the forked branch.
They have made a tripod shape!

Mrs Owl loops a piece of rope around the three branches and shows
the animals how to knot it in place.



Now the friends lean smaller sticks along two sides of the den.
They do it again, and again . . . it's starting to look like a tunnel shape!

MRS OWL'S GUIDE TO KNOTS

Here are a few knots you can try making. They might take a bit of practice!

OVERHAND KNOT



1. Make a circle with the rope.

2. Push one end of the rope through the circle.

3. Pull to tighten! This is a quick easy knot to learn.

REEF KNOT



1. Using two ropes, cross them over, left over right.

2. Cross over again, right over left.

3. Pull to tighten. This is used to tie ropes together.



"HOORAY! It's finished," says Fox.

"But I can still see the sky," says Squirrel.

"That's because it hasn't got a roof yet," says Mrs Owl.

"For that, we need lots of little twigs and leaves."

All the animals hurry to gather tiny twigs and big armfuls of scrunchy leaves.

They stuff them into every gap. The animals are working so well as a team.

All except one . . .
Mouse feels too small to help.

