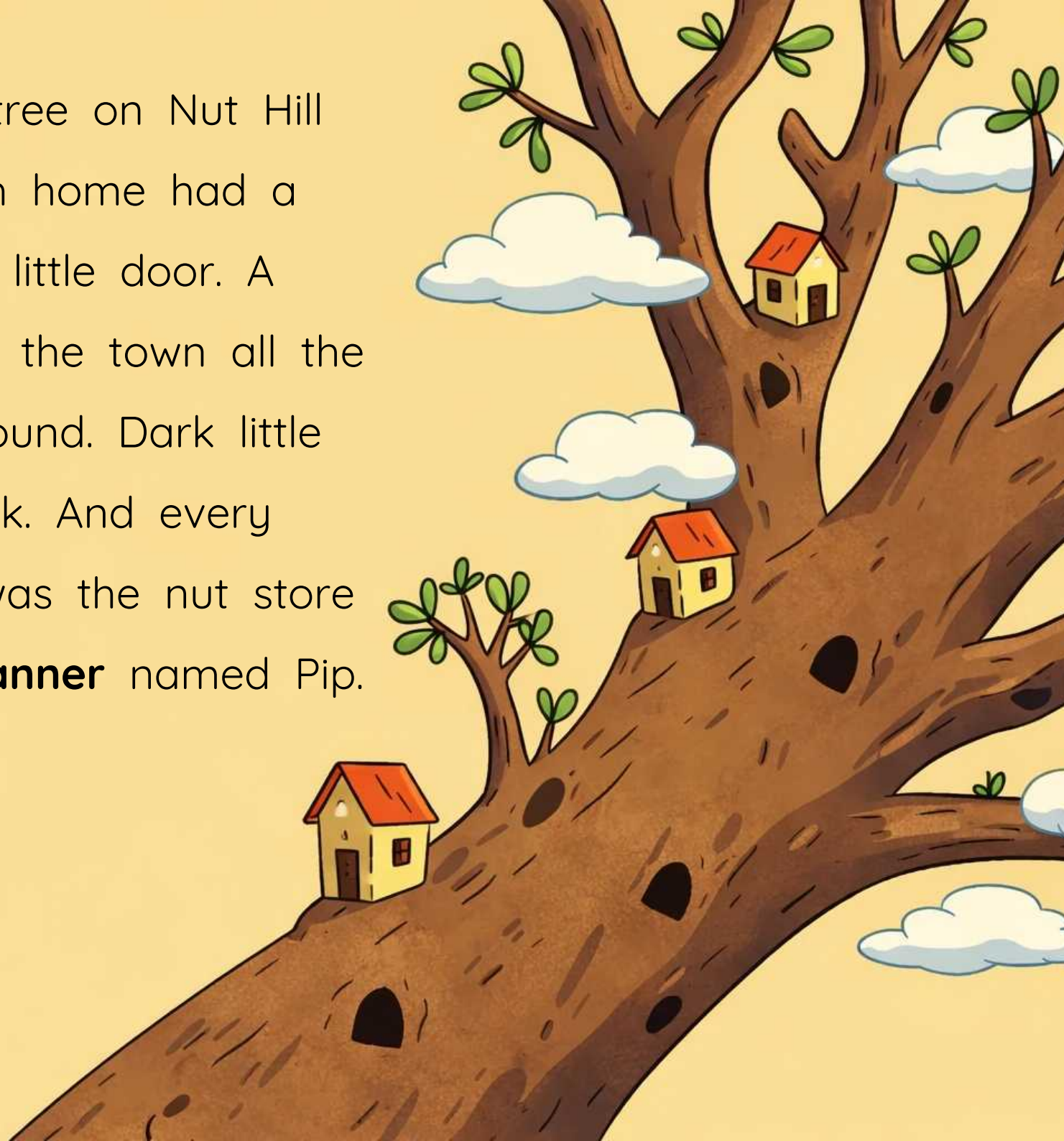


# Catch That Nut Robber!



High in the **biggest** tree on Nut Hill sat a tiny town. Each home had a red roof and a dark little door. A bark path went from the town all the way down to the ground. Dark little holes dotted the trunk. And every one of those holes was the nut store of one very busy **planner** named Pip.





Pip had been grabbing nuts from the day the first leaf turned red. She stuffed them in every hole she could find. One nut by the rock, three by the tree, an armful crammed in the hole by the pumpkin patch. 'Forty-six, forty-seven,' she counted, then ran down the hill for more. Pip was the best **planner** on the hill, and Pip was no **quitter**.

The next morning, Pip checked her best spot. Empty. She checked every hole in the trunk and every hole in the ground. Not one nut. Not one crumb. 'Who took my nuts?' Pip yelled, **madder** by the minute. A bird hopped over. 'Not me. I eat worms.' 'Well, a **robber** took them,' said Pip. 'And I will find out who.'





Pip ran up to the beehive.  
The bees would know. They  
were the **biggest** chatters on  
the hill, and they saw all that  
went on. 'Bees!' Pip called.  
'Did any of you see who took  
my nuts?' The bees hummed  
back as one. 'We did not see  
a thing.' 'Is that true?' said  
Pip. 'Forty-nine nuts can't just  
hop off on their own.'

'Did you check?' Pip asked.  
'Did each bee check? Did every last bee check?' That was one ask too many. Now the bees were **madder** than Pip. They rushed at her in a buzzing cloud. Pip lost her grip, flipped upside down, and crashed all the way to the ground. Leaves scattered all about. 'Fine!' she yelled on the way down. 'I will go ask the others!'





Pip got up and spotted a fly by a patch of wildflowers. 'Fly!' she called. 'Help me hunt for my nuts!' The fly just looked at her. Then he turned and flew the other way. 'Fine,' Pip muttered. 'Nobody saw a thing. Nobody wants to help.' She sat down on a rock and put her head in her paws. It was the **saddest** day ever.

'Pip! Up top!' Liz was waving from a branch with a big bit of fruit. 'I know about your nuts. What a **bummer!** Want a bit of mine?' Pip looked up. Her belly growled. That fruit looked so good. But she shook her head. 'No thanks, Liz. Save it for your birthday. I will fix this.' Liz smiled. That was Pip. Stubborn, but always thinking of her friends.





Liz sat down beside Pip. For a bit, nobody spoke. Then Liz said, 'We all see how hard you work, Pip. Nobody would steal from you.' Pip blinked. Her face went red. She had been so busy asking who took her nuts, she had never stopped to ask if a **robber** took them at all. 'Wait,' said Pip. 'If nobody took them, then where did they go?'

Pip's tail twitched. She gripped the bark and started down the trunk, nose first, sniffing as she went. If nobody had taken the nuts up, then maybe the nuts had dropped down. Lower and lower she went, past the homes, past the dark holes, all the way down to where the roots spread out like big toes. Then a sound came up to her. A soft **patter**. A small, shuffling sound.





A little beaver sat at the base of the tree, in a big pile of nuts. Pip's nuts! 'So sorry,' said the beaver, head down. 'My name is Bud. I am a **digger**, and I dug too deep. My den broke into the nut store, and every last nut rolled in. I did not know the nuts were yours.' Pip looked at her forty-nine nuts. Then she started to grin. All that fuss, and it was just a hole in the floor!

Pip was not just a **planner**. She was a builder. She grabbed planks and nails and hammered them across the hole until it was sealed up tight. Bang, bang, bang. 'There,' she said. 'Nobody's nuts will run off now.' Then she tucked every nut back in its spot and climbed up to her little home in the branches.





Pip sank into her seat, pulled up a snug blanket, and watched the sunset light fill the window. Forty-nine nuts. All safe. All counted. She took a sip of acorn tea and grinned. Tomorrow she would find Liz and say thanks. Because the answer was not 'who took my nuts.' The answer was 'maybe nobody did.' And that made Pip the **snuggest napper** on the hill.



## Catch That Nut Robber!

High in the biggest tree on Nut Hill, a busy planner named Pip has hidden forty-nine nuts in every hole she can find, ready for winter. But one morning every single nut is gone, and Pip is sure a robber is to blame. She asks the bees, she asks the birds, but no one seems to know a thing. Who could have taken every last nut, and where could they possibly have gone? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 108: Doubling Rule -er, -est), this book practices words like 'robber', 'madder', 'chatter', 'biggest', 'quitter'.

**Phonics Focus:** Doubling Rule -er/-est

biggest, bumper, chatter, digger, madder, napper, patter, planner, quitter, robber, saddest, scatter, suggest

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