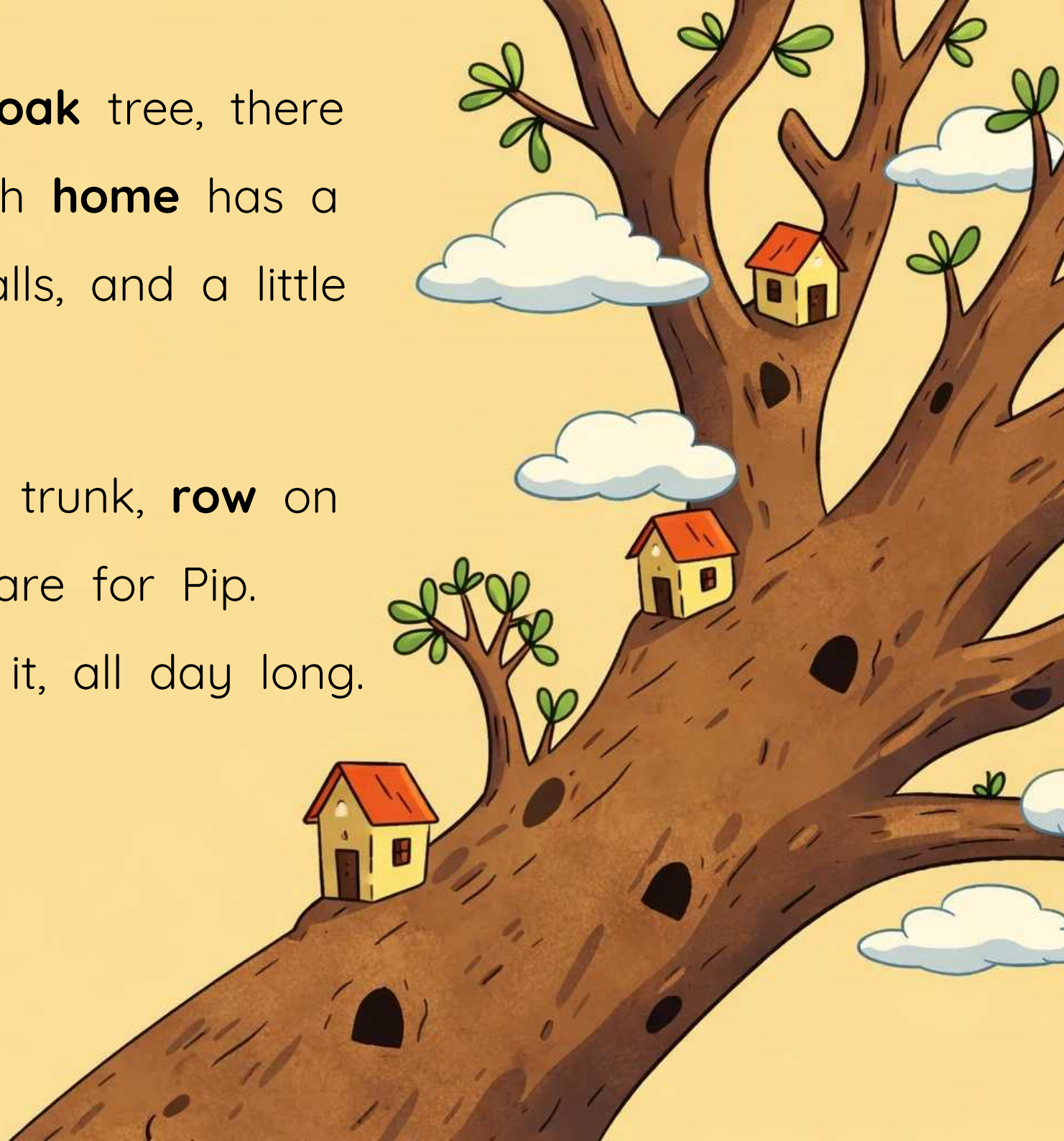


How Did Pip's Nuts Go?



High up in an old **oak** tree, there is a tiny **town**. Each **home** has a red roof, **yellow** walls, and a little dark way in.

Dark **holes** dot the trunk, **row** on **row**. All the **holes** are for Pip. And Pip is hard at it, all day long.





When the first leaf turns orange, Pip starts to collect nuts. She **stows** them in all the **holes** she sees. One nut here. Three nuts there. She crams an armful in the big **hole** by the pumpkins.

'Fifteen, sixteen...' she counts, and runs **down** the hill to get more. Winter will come soon, and Pip will not go hungry.

In the morning, Pip checks her best spot. No nuts. She checks the next **hole**. No nuts. Not one nut in the **oak**, not one in the ground. 'Who took my nuts?' Pip yells. A bird hops up. 'Not me,' he says. 'I eat bugs.' Pip **frowns**. 'Well, some sly beast took them. And I will get him.'





Pip runs up to the hive in the **oak**. The bees see all that goes on. They buzz and **poke** all day. 'Bees!' Pip calls out. 'Did any bee see who took my nuts?' A hum comes back from the hive. 'We did not see it. We did not see it at all.' 'Is that right?' says Pip. 'Nuts do not roll off on their **own!**'

'Is that right?' asks Pip. 'Is that right? Is that RIGHT?' She asks one time too many. The bees rush at her in a buzzing cloud. Pip slips off the branch, flips, and drops **down** to the grass far **below**. 'Fine!' she yells on the way **down**. 'I will ask a fly!'





Pip gets up and spots a fly by the **yellow flowers**. 'Fly! Help me hunt for my nuts!'

The fly gazes at her for one long blink. Then he turns and buzzes off the other way.

'**Wow,**' Pip **moans**. 'No bird saw it. No bee saw it. No fly will help.' She sits on a rock with a big **frown**. This is a bad, bad day.

'Pip! Up here!' Liz calls from a branch. She holds food out to Pip. 'No nuts! That is so sad. Take this food, Pip.' Pip looks up. Something in Pip **growls**. She is so hungry. But she says no. 'Keep it, Liz. I will fix this.' Liz smiles. Pip is like that. She will not bend, but she is good to all.





Liz comes **down** and sits by Pip on the branch. For a bit, no one says a thing. Then Liz speaks. 'Pip, all the **town** sees **how** hard **those** nuts were to get. No one here would steal them.' Pip blinks. 'Wait,' she says, **slow** and **low**. 'If no one took my nuts... then where did the nuts go?'

Pip's tail flips up. She grips the bark and goes **down** the trunk, sniffing as she goes.

If no one took the nuts up, then the nuts may have rolled **down**!

Lower and **lower** she goes, past the **homes**, past the dark **holes, down** to the roots **below**. And then, a soft sound. A small, shy sound.





A little **fellow** sits at the base of the **oak**, by a big pile. Pip's nuts! This is Bud. Bud digs **holes** to **stow** his **own** food. But this **hole** is too deep. It goes right into Pip's store, and all the nuts roll **down** into it. 'I feel so bad,' Bud **moans**, ears **low**. 'I did not mean it. I did not think the nuts had an **owner**.' Pip looks at her nuts. Then she grins. 'All that fuss, and it is just a **hole** in the ground!'

Pip does not just **stow** nuts.
She can fix things.

She gets planks. She gets
nails. She hammers planks
across the **hole**. Bang, bang,
bang! **Now** the **hole** is shut
tight.

'There,' she says. 'No one's
nuts will roll **down** there **now**.'
Then she tucks all her nuts
back in place and goes up to
her **home** in the branches.





Pip sinks into her seat, pulls up a blanket, and looks at the sunset **glow** in the **window**. All her nuts are safe. All are back in place. She sips her tea and smiles. In the morning she will go and thank Liz. 'Who took my nuts?' Pip says with a grin. 'No one did. No one at all!'



How Did Pip's Nuts Go?

High up in an oak tree, a tiny town of little homes lines a trunk full of dark holes, and every hole belongs to one busy squirrel who has been stowing nuts all season. One morning she checks her holes and finds every single one empty. Who could have taken them, and where did all those nuts go? Written for Jolly Phonics classrooms (Step 3, Unit 7: /oa/ mixed), this book practices words like 'oak', 'below', 'holes', 'owner', 'window'.

Phonics Focus: <mixed>

below, down, fellow, flowers, frown, frowns, glow, growls, hole, holes, home, homes, how, low, lower, moans, now, oak, own, owner, poke, row, slow, stow, stows, those, town, window, wow, yellow

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