

The Story of Bettrys

Chapter 1 The day before it happened

This is a story about Bettrys and her beaver family. It is also about Berth her mother whose name means beautiful, Berthog her dad whose name means wealthy and their three beaver kits, that's the term used for young beavers. Bettrys is their oldest kit, her name means bringer of joy, Brac is the second oldest, his name means free, and Bevyn their youngest kit, whose name means youthful.

Before the awful thing happened, Bettrys loved playing games, she liked scampering about in the woods whatever the weather. She liked opening prickly green shells to find shiny brown conkers, shiny shells and white shiny pebbles from the water's edge.

Mum and dad sometimes helped Bettrys by giving her pebbles they found. She kept her treasure together in a small hollow log, each time she looked at them they brought back memories of happy times together.



She also loved spending time with Bevyn and Brac, as the oldest beaver she knew it was her job to help take care of them. She liked to teach them the skills that mum and dad had taught her like how to store juicy bark wood and how to keep their cosy lodge clean. Mum and dad could take care of them all by getting food, building dams and keeping the lodge strong.

This was how her life was before, when they had all lived together underneath the dam on the river. Their lodge had a room to store food and to dry off in when they swam into it straight from the river. There was also a family room where they ate and slept together, shared stories and played games.

Chapter 2 Afterwards

Betrys thought a lot about what happened to change everything. Why had she not been able to help more. She felt angry with herself that she had been so scared and she thought about what else she should have done.

Now it was like she was always day dreaming.

'If only I had done more we would all still be together.'

'Mum and dad were counting on me and I've let them down.'

'Why am I here? If only it was me and not them.'

Betrys felt like she had a big stone sitting in the bottom of her tummy making her feel heavy. She felt sad about losing her collection of conkers, shiny white stones and shells and all the lovely memories they held. She thought this was such a small thing compared to what the bad thing did to all her family.

Getting to sleep was tricky too, she would dream about the bad thing. Sometimes it felt so real like it all was happening again. When she wakes up crying mum has to remind her that she is safe now. It's hard to do her chores because she's worried that the bad thing might come back. Sometimes she thinks she sees and hears things and it's like she is right back there, she can jump at big sounds and inside she feels sick and scared.



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She tells herself if the bad thing came back at least she will do the right thing this time. At other times she thinks about digging a big hole and crawling into it to help her forget. The rest of the time she wants to stay very close to her mum and Bevyn.

Chapter 3 When it happened

'Bettrys, Bettrys?' When she opened her eyes she saw mum's face and she had Bevyn by her side. They both looked scared, Bevyn was shivering and her teeth were chattering. Mum started to cry and through her tears told Bettrys that something sad had happened to dad and Brac because of the bad thing from the sky. Mum asked Bettrys if she was hurt and if she could still run? Bettrys felt shaken she was bruised and cold, but she knew she didn't have any big hurts.

Mum told Bettrys to follow her quietly so the bad thing in the sky could not hear them. She led Bettrys and Bevyn through the forest to a hole in the bottom of a tree, where they huddled together quietly. It was hard to believe what mum had told her, it couldn't be true, this wasn't really happening to her, it was like a bad dream.

Bettrys' tears wouldn't come and neither did Bevyn's. It felt like they were in the tree hole together for a long, long time. There were lots of strange noises and they all felt scared that something bad might happen again.



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Betrys will never forget that awful day. They had all been fast asleep, mum, dad, Brac and Bevyn, when suddenly, there was a terrible noise that seemed to come from the sky. It was so loud they couldn't hear each other, and everything was ripped up, and thrown about, and something big and hard like huge teeth appeared from nowhere. It grabbed the whole lodge in its mouth and shook it hard.

Betrys heard screams and shouting from mum and dad, 'Run, run, getaway....' Only there was nowhere to run to. The ground was moving, she felt like she was being lifted higher and higher before suddenly she felt herself falling to the ground. Betrys couldn't remember what happened after that as everything went dark.

Chapter 4 Help and big feelings

Night came and the forest sounded quieter. Mum checked it was safe to go out, telling Betrys and Bevyn they had to stay in the tree hole until she came back and care for each other.

They did as they were told and when Bevyn started to whimper Betrys held her close and they cried quietly together.

When they heard a noise outside they both jumped and then they realised it was mum followed by her beaver aunts, uncles and cousins. They'd all heard about the bad thing from the sky and they were glad that now they had help.



Help and Big Feelings

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Betrys asked mum if the other beavers could go and bring back dad and Brac. Mum looked very sad and gently told her that dad and Brac had been so badly hurt that they would never wake up again or come home. Mum said that they had laid dad and Brac together in a special place underground where they would stay forever. She promised them that one day that they would go there and remember the special times they had together.

Mum held them both close and Bevan cried, but Bettrys's tears did not come as easily, she felt angry about the bad thing. She wanted to leave the tree hole to go and find it, to hurt it and hit it, to scream at it for taking away dad and Brac. The other beavers listened to her as she wailed and whimpered.

They said it was okay for Bettrys to show her big feelings and to want things to be like they were before. They joined in with her sad and angry calls and beat their tails hard on the ground until they were worn out. Bettrys fell asleep snuggled together with her family around her.

Chapter 5 The first morning

When Bettrys and Bevyn woke up, mum and the other beavers were all eating the first meal of the night. They gave Bevyn and Bettrys the best bark wood to eat and mum told them they had to be strong now to get away from the bad thing.

They knew mum was right but it felt hard for Bettrys because she didn't feel much like eating at all.



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Mum and Banon, the wisest, oldest beaver mother in the forest told Bettrys and Bevyn about their plan to find them a new home because it wasn't safe to go back. Bettrys felt sad, it was like the bad thing from the sky had all the power. It had thrown them out of their home and taken dad and Brac away.

It was a very bad, bad thing and Bettrys wished that the great Beaver, who could make the skies rumble and cut down the trees with a silver flash, would strike the bad thing in the sky to pieces.

Chapter 6 The journey

They set out into the night, Banon had decided they would swim up river to the oldest part of the forest. She had never heard of the bad thing in the sky hurting beavers there.

Banon's name also had a special meaning of Queen.

In that part of the forest there are so many trees. Banon told them that this was going to be a good place to live. It was a long swim and they stayed with other beaver families along the way. This was hard for Bettrys, the other young beavers played games she did not know. She missed the games she would play with her conkers, shells and pebbles.



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Other parents gave her lots of advice and tried to get her to do things in ways she was not used to. Mum and dad had already shown her how to pull logs and branches and how to fell trees. She did not like being told how to do these things their way.

She did not like sharing a bed space with other kits that she didn't really know either.

Some of them teased her and Bevyn, saying that they would have killed the bad thing in the sky rather than running away and leaving their dad and brother.

Chapter 7 Bettrys' feelings

Only mum and Bevyn understood what Bettrys felt. She was different now to the other kits that swam and scampered about having fun. It was as if the angry thing in the sky wasn't real. Perhaps it wasn't, what if it was all a dream? She would wake up tomorrow and everything would be back to normal.

The heavy feeling in Bettrys' tummy came back and she knew Bevyn could tell by the way she looked at her. Bevyn told mum she was worried about Bettrys. Mum had noticed that Bettrys wasn't sleeping and that she was looking out for danger. She noticed Bettrys was quiet and that she wasn't playing with Bevyn as much.



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Bettrys still took Bevyn swimming they didn't seem to have fun anymore. Bevyn said she felt tired out from all the practice that Bettrys made her do because she wanted to make her strong, in case the bad thing happened again. Mum suggested to Bettrys that she speak to Banon because she was a very knowing beaver and together they went to see her.

Chapter 8 Bettrys and Banon

Banon was waiting for Bettrys under the tree with drooping branches that touched the river. Bettrys liked the green colour of the tree and the arch it made overhead. It reminded her of how her dad would wrap lots of branches into one strong piece shaping them into the walls of their lodge and she felt safe sat underneath the leafy roof.

Her snout was filled with the sweet smells of the river helping her feel calm. Banon gave her a warm smile and spoke softly to her. She listened to Bettrys without interruption as her words and feelings flowed and as she spoke she started to feel a bit better.

Bettrys made a plan with Banon about how to help herself and what she could do in between their special time spent together under the lovely green tree. When they met it was as if time stopped, she could just think and talk. Bettrys started to look forward to the time with Banon, and mum joined them so she could understand how to help Bettrys feel better inside.



Betrys learned that it was okay for her to have muddles, wobbles and spiky feelings and for her to feel glad to have survived and to enjoy herself. She had also learned that everything she felt was okay because what had happened to her was not a regular thing. And that what happened to dad and Brac wasn't her fault and that bad things from the sky hardly ever happen.

Banon helped Betrys think about the unkind things that the other kits said. She wondered with Betrys, would she have believed such a story if it hadn't happened to her? This made Betrys think perhaps it was just too scary for the kits to believe it. Had they wanted to make up a different ending because what happened was so sad. Betrys thought, 'Maybe I don't have to be on guard all of the time. What if the forest is safe after all, one day I might feel safe again, but I will always miss dad and Brac.'

Chapter 9 The first year after the bad thing

Betrys had a new home, mum and her family built it deep into the river bank. It was warm and cosy and the smell reminded Betrys of their old lodge.

It was the time of year when the forest wakes up after the long sleep of winter. This was the time of the year when the bad thing from the sky came. The awful feeling in Betrys' tummy that had been getting less now came back. Betrys was surprised at the heaviness of it, she found herself watching and waiting again for something bad to happen.

The next day Banon, her aunt, uncles and cousins arrived and they all began their special journey back to where dad and Brac slept in their forever place. Their journey back seemed long. On the way they stayed with family and friends again. Betrys cried along the way, she thought a lot about what happened and they talked together long into the night as they worked and ate.

Banon told tales of the first beavers who tamed the forest and listened to Betrys reminding her that she was safe and that the bad thing from the sky hadn't come back. Together they found dad and Brac's special sleeping place.



The first year after the bad thing

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Mum, Bettrys and Bevyn spoke about what had happened since the time of the bad thing. They cried together because their hearts ached with the loss of their father and brother. They remembered happy times when they were all together. Bettrys found some new pebbles and shells that she kept to remember their visit.

After a few days they made their way back to their new home. Bettrys felt sad and glad that mum had kept her promise. She told Bettrys that they would return every spring to remember their lives before with dad and Brac.

Bettrys liked that there would always be a time when they could come together like this. She knew she would never forget what happened and that she was changed by

what she had been through.

She understood that few kits or even adult beavers had been hurt like her family had. She knew that life was the most precious thing of all. She knew that conkers, pebbles and shells could be replaced but that loved ones could not and that she would always hold dad and Brac in her heart. She had learned that she could live a happy life again and that the bad thing didn't have the power to shape her future. She was in charge of her life and she was going to live how she wanted to.

The end.