

A Day in the Life of Tuffy and Mr. Babbles

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Tuffy, a people pleasing dwarf rabbit sneaks into a frightening movie with his friend, a notoriety seeking fawn, named Poe. Fearful that his secret will leak out, Tuffy scampers home through the woods in order to escape the realization of his fears Will Tuffyâs secret fear of the dark become a horrible reality or will Mr. Babbles help him to see that the power of truth is brighter than any secret darkness may hold.



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It was the summer premier movie of the year, and the whole town of Appleton buzzed with excitement. The local newspaper gave the movie a two-thumbs-up review and promised viewers plenty of action-packed scenes with mystery. At the bottom of the review, printed in big, bold letters was the statement "Warning: Children under the age of 13 are not permitted."

When Tuffy read the warning, he sighed with disappointment as his short fuzzy ears lay back. He had hoped to be able to see the movie this weekend. If only he were a teenager, then he would be able to see the premier movie and join in on the conversation with some of the older kids during lunch time at camp. For now, all he could do was listen, as the camp leaders expressed why they thought this was the greatest movie of the summer. Tuffy heard one of the camp leaders say that the movie was a little too gory. *Too gory?*, thought Tuffy as the expression on his little furry face turned from excited to concerned.

Meanwhile, Poe, a friend of Tuffy's who also attended the same summer camp, overheard a few kids his age bragging about how they had snuck in to see the premier movie. "It was simple," one of them said. "All you have to do is purchase a ticket for the movie marked Rated G, give your ticket to the movie attendant, and sneak in with the other moviegoers into the cinema showing the premier movie."

While scratching his antlers, Poe came up with an idea; he could do the same thing. He could see the movie everyone was talking about, and maybe by doing this he wouldn't be seen as the scared little fawn. It was his chance to finally prove to everyone in the small town of Appleton that he could be courageous.

When Tuffy reached camp that day, Poe asked him if he'd like to see a movie with him on Friday afternoon. Tuffy told Poe that it sounded like a good idea to see a movie on Friday but he would need to get permission from his mother first. So, that evening when Tuffy came home from camp, he asked his mother if he could see a movie with Poe on Friday.

"Sure, but you're not referring to the premier movie that has the whole town stirred up are you?" asked Miss Rabbit.

"Oh no, I'm not old enough to see the premier movie and neither is Poe," answered Tuffy.

"Well, I guess it would be alright for you see a movie as long as you're in the house before it gets dark," replied Mrs. Rabbit.

On Friday morning, Miss Rabbit drove Tuffy to summer camp. As Tuffy was exiting the car Mrs. Rabbit reminded him that she would be working late and he needed to make it in the house before it turned dark outside. Tuffy smiled then told his mother that he understood and off he went. All the kids were lining up to hear the camp agenda for that day, while the camp leaders counted the students that belonged to their assigned groups. Tuffy found Poe and told him the good news.

"Great," said Poe. "My dad will be here after camp and he'll drop us off at the theater around four o'clock today." Tuffy smiled, and then thought to himself that he was glad that they weren't going to see the premier movie. He remembered what the camp leader had said about the movie being a little too gory; the thought of it made the fur on the back of his neck stand up.

Later on that day, Poe's dad picked the boys up from camp then dropped them off at the movie theater. Tuffy and Poe purchased tickets for an animated movie that was Rated G. The boys handed the ticket

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collector their tickets, then made their way to the concessions area to buy some popcorn and drinks. While waiting in line, Poe decided to tell Tuffy about his plans for them to sneak in to see the premier movie. As Poe explained the plan to Tuffy, his little nose started to sweat and his furry cotton tail shrank back as his heart began to pound. "I don't know Poe, the newspaper did state that children under the age of thirteen are not allowed in to see the premier movie," said Tuffy with a nervous look of concern on his face.

"I know, but look at it this way: we could see the premier movie, then brag about it at camp on Monday," said Poe.

Even if he didn't think it was a good idea to see the movie, Tuffy didn't want to disappoint his friend, so he agreed to go with Poe's plan. While carrying the popcorn and drinks they had purchased, Poe and Tuffy snuck in with a crowd of noisy moviegoers entering the cinema showing the premier movie.

Once inside, Tuffy looked around the room and noticed that everyone who was watching the movie looked older than he and Poe, which started to really worry him. Poe, on the other hand, was bouncing with excitement. His plan had worked!

The boys spotted two empty seats at the very top of the stairs. As they sat down, the theater darkened and now only the lights located on the steps and walls of the theater were on. When the movie started, it was loud and full of scenes that made the boys jump and hide their faces with their hands.

Clearly this was not a movie for kids under the age of thirteen: it was full of noisy and scary scenes that had the boys gripping each other in fear. When the movie was over, Tuffy and Poe stood outside the theater waiting for Poe's dad to arrive. Neither one of them wanted to admit that the movie scared them, so they only talked about the parts of the movie that weren't so frightening.

"There were really some great special effects and graphics in the movie," said Poe.

Tuffy agreed and said, "The fight scenes with the different weapons and the superfast cycles were great too."

While they were discussing the movie, Tuffy noticed that the sun was starting to set over the tree tops. "I'll be going home now," he said. Then he remembered his mother's words about getting home before dark and that she had to work late. This meant he would be home all alone tonight.

"My dad should be here soon, so we could give you a ride home if you want," said Poe.

"No thanks," said Tuffy. If he waited on Poe's dad to get there, it would be dark when he arrived home. So he said goodbye to Poe and ran home as fast as he could. He scampered through the poppy fields near the Woodlyn Forest. As Tuffy stopped to take a quick look around, he noticed that he could barely see the sun as it set over the tree tops near the hills.

In the distance, Tuffy spotted the prickly berry bushes that sat just above the two boulders which shaded the front door of his home. As the sun disappeared behind the hills, darkness crept over the valley. First the poppy fields, then Woodlyn Forest, and soon all of Appleton was covered in a light shade of darkness. Fireflies greeted each other in the dark, and even the crickets joined in on the event.

Tuffy watched the trees bend and shake as the wind blew through the forest. Fallen leaves raced across the field like little scampering mice. Then, full darkness settled on Appleton, making it almost impossible to see anything that could be making the strange noises all around him.

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Crouching beside the willow tree, Tuffy sat quivering as he stared at the window of the burrow. He struggled to remember if he had left a light on before leaving the burrow that morning. *Is there something inside waiting to get me?* Tuffy thought to himself while wishing his friend Mr. Babbles was there with him. Mr. Babbles is an old river otter who loves to eat crayfish nuggets, he always watches over Tuffy and appears whenever he needs or wants him. What is special about Mr. Babbles is only Tuffy can see him.

Suddenly, the sound of crunching dry leaves and twigs seemed to echo from behind the bushes in front of Tuffy. With his eyes shut tightly and his little paws clenched into fists, Tuffy asked, "Who's there?"

The crunching stopped, and out jumped his dear friend Mr. Babbles from behind an old log that lay nearby. Giggling to himself, Mr. Babbles asked, "Why are you crouching beside the willow tree in the dark?"

"I am looking at the window of the burrow," Tuffy answered.

"Is there something missing from the window that was once there?" asked Mr. Babbles.

"I am not sure," Tuffy said in a shaky voice.

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Babbles.

"Earlier today I left a light burning in the window and now the light is out," explained Tuffy as he sighed.

"Are you sure you left a light burning in the window?" asked Mr. Babbles as he reached into his pocket for a crayfish nugget to nibble on.

"It doesn't matter if I forgot to leave the light on; the problem is there is no light in the window!" Tuffy sobbed in frustration.

Tuffy was right, that was the real problem. So he and Mr. Babbles sat crouched together by the willow tree trying to figure out what to do next.

"We could wait until your mother comes home from work," suggested Mr. Babbles.

"We would have to wait until morning, and I am getting sleepy," said Tuffy.

"May I ask, why haven't you gone into the house? Surely you could turn the light on once you are inside," said Mr. Babbles.

Tuffy scrunched up his nose and looked at Mr. Babbles as he took a deep breath. "If I tell you a secret, do you promise not to tell anyone?"

"I promise not to tell a soul," Mr. Babbles said with a warm smile.

"I am afraid of being by myself in the burrow when the light is out," Tuffy confessed. "There are scary creatures that live underneath my bed, and hungry trolls that hide in the closet while grinding their teeth, waiting for the chance to eat little rabbits like me."

"Have you seen these monsters and trolls that live beneath your bed?" Mr. Babbles asked while carefully listening to Tuffy speak.

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"No, not really but I remember falling asleep in my bed early one evening after my mother had tucked me tightly in my cozy sheets. I was awoken during the middle of the night and found that the light in the window had gone out. It was dark and scary, so I placed the covers over my head hoping it would shield me from the monsters.

One by one, the creatures would move around whispering in the dark and make scary noises with their sharp teeth," Tuffy whispered to Mr. Babbles. "How did you ever survive such a spooky night?" asked Mr. Babbles, as he continued to munch on his delicious crayfish bits.

"I used the little flashlight that was hidden under my pillow to keep me safe. Now do you understand why it's so important that the light stay on in the window?" asked Tuffy.

Mr. Babbles scratched his head. "Well, there's only one way to find out if the monsters have taken over the burrow," said Mr. Babbles.

"How?" asked Tuffy.

Mr. Babbles suddenly grabbed Tuffy's hand and ran yelling toward the door of the burrow.

Tuffy wasn't sure why Mr. Babbles was yelling, but he too began yelling as they ran toward the burrow. It seemed like a good idea once they reached the door.

Before Tuffy could say anything, Mr. Babbles stuck out his hand and pushed the door of the burrow open. He turned on a light, and they both began looking around the burrow for signs of monsters. They looked in the closets, but there were no scary creatures or trolls inside. Next they looked under Tuffy's bed. "There are no monsters waiting to grab little rabbits here," said Mr. Babbles. Lastly, they checked the cabinets just in case a hungry troll or two was hidden.

"You can never be too safe," said Tuffy.

"Ok Tuffy, we've checked every possible place a scary creature could hide. As you can see, there are no monsters to be found," said Mr. Babbles.

Tuffy fixed some warm milk and cookies to eat before getting ready for bed. As he was putting on his pajamas, Tuffy wondered how he had come to be so afraid of the dark. For some reason he seemed to be a little more afraid tonight than usual.

"You must be careful of the things you watch and read," Mr. Babbles explained to Tuffy.

"Sometimes when you watch a scary movie or read a scary book, the pictures and descriptions of different things stay in your imagination. Then all it takes is for you to be in a similar setting and your imagination brings those things to life. That made Tuffy think about the premier movie he watched and he shuddered.

"Do you get scared sometimes?" asked Tuffy.

"Yes, just because I'm an old river otter doesn't mean that I don't get scared sometimes," said Mr. Babbles.

"Do you sleep with the light on, too?" asked Tuffy.

"Sometimes," said Mr. Babbles with a chuckle. Tuffy wanted to know how not to be afraid.

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“I believe everyone and everything is afraid of something, it’s just a part of life,” explained Mr. Babbles. “I believe truth is a strong cure for fear. The more you know the truth about something, the less control it has over you,” said Mr. Babbles. “You found the courage to face your fear tonight, and that is an important part of defeating what scares you. Keep being courageous and you’ll be well on your way to living a life without the control of fear. Now, close your eyes and sleep without being afraid,” said Mr. Babbles. “Just remember that I’ll always come whenever you need me.” And with that, Mr. Babbles disappeared behind the closet door.

Tuffy yawned, pulled the covers tight and closed his eyes. He was relieved to know that the monsters and trolls were all part of his imagination. It also made him feel better to know he wasn’t the only one who was afraid sometimes. In the end, Tuffy realized there was nothing to fear. He had learned the truth about monsters underneath the bed and trolls that grind their teeth in the closets of little rabbits. He still wanted to sleep with the light on, however; just in case he wanted a drink of water in the middle of the night, of course.

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