

Endorsements

“We all have God given gifts that we can use for the betterment of everyone else. Pepper discovers his gift and in the process makes some new friends. Besides being entertaining, I learned a few things about porcupines that I never knew before. I recommend this book to young families who enjoy animals, and just like us, despite differences; each person has value and is part of God’s plan.”

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Kevin Moore
319-521-1072

I have been Terri’s pastor for many years now, so when she asked if I’d write an endorsement for her first book *“Pepper’s Delightful Discovery”*, I was thrilled and honored!

As a teacher and a lover of Christ, Terri has blended faith with a lesson about self-worth and giftedness that all kids need to hear. And to top it all off, the illustrations in the book are excellent!

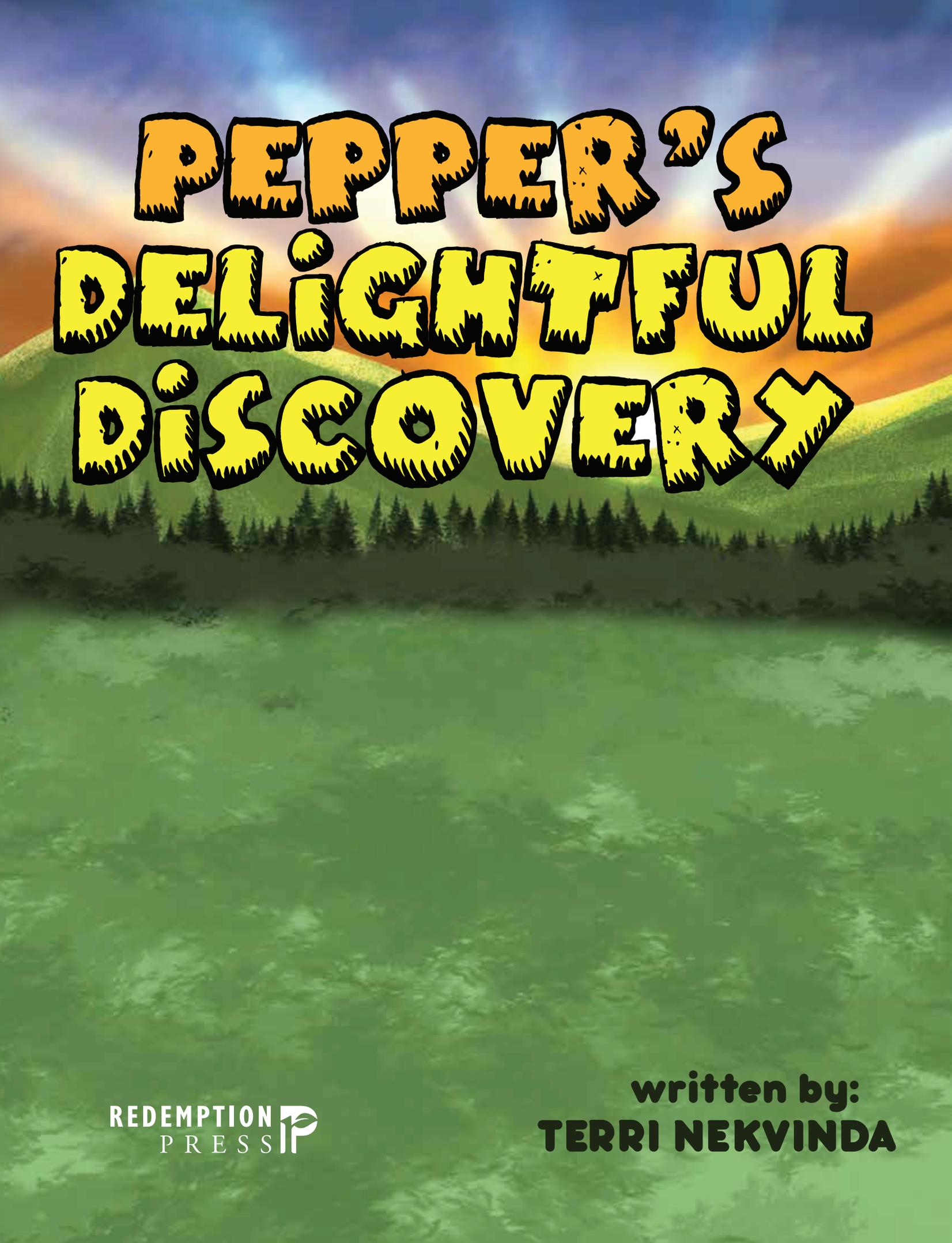
Whether you are a Sunday School teacher, a parent, or a grand-parent, this is a book that you will want to find time to sit down and read with the children in your life.

Rev. Craig Peters
Pastor- Prairie Bible Church
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 319-210-8316

Thursday mornings is story time at the Springville Memorial Library. This last Thursday we had the pleasure of meeting a new friend who is a local Author, Terri Nekvinda. She brought her wonderful book, *Pepper’s Delightful Discovery* to share! We all enjoyed meeting Pepper and learning about porcupines. Pepper held the attention of the children with his adventure in the forest trying to make a new friend. The ending of the story was a delightful surprise. Terri has a very easy way with the children and held the adults’ attention as well. We look forward to many more adventures with Pepper and look forward to seeing our new friend, Terri again.

Linda Eldred,
Director of the Springville Memorial Library
319-854-6444



The background of the cover is a vibrant landscape. At the top, a bright sun is setting or rising, creating a warm orange and yellow glow. Below the sun, a line of dark green evergreen trees stretches across the horizon. In the foreground, a wide, green river flows, its surface reflecting the light from the sky. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

PEPPER'S DELIGHTFUL DISCOVERY

REDEMPTION
PRESS 

written by:
TERRI NEKVINDA

Pepper's Delightful Discovery

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Republished by Redemption Press 2018

Published by Redemption Press, PO Box 427, Enumclaw, WA 98022

Toll Free (844) 2REDEEM (273-3336)

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ISBN 13: 978-1-68314-759-6 (Paperback)

978-1-68314-760-2 (Hard Cover)

978-1-68314-761-9 (ePub)

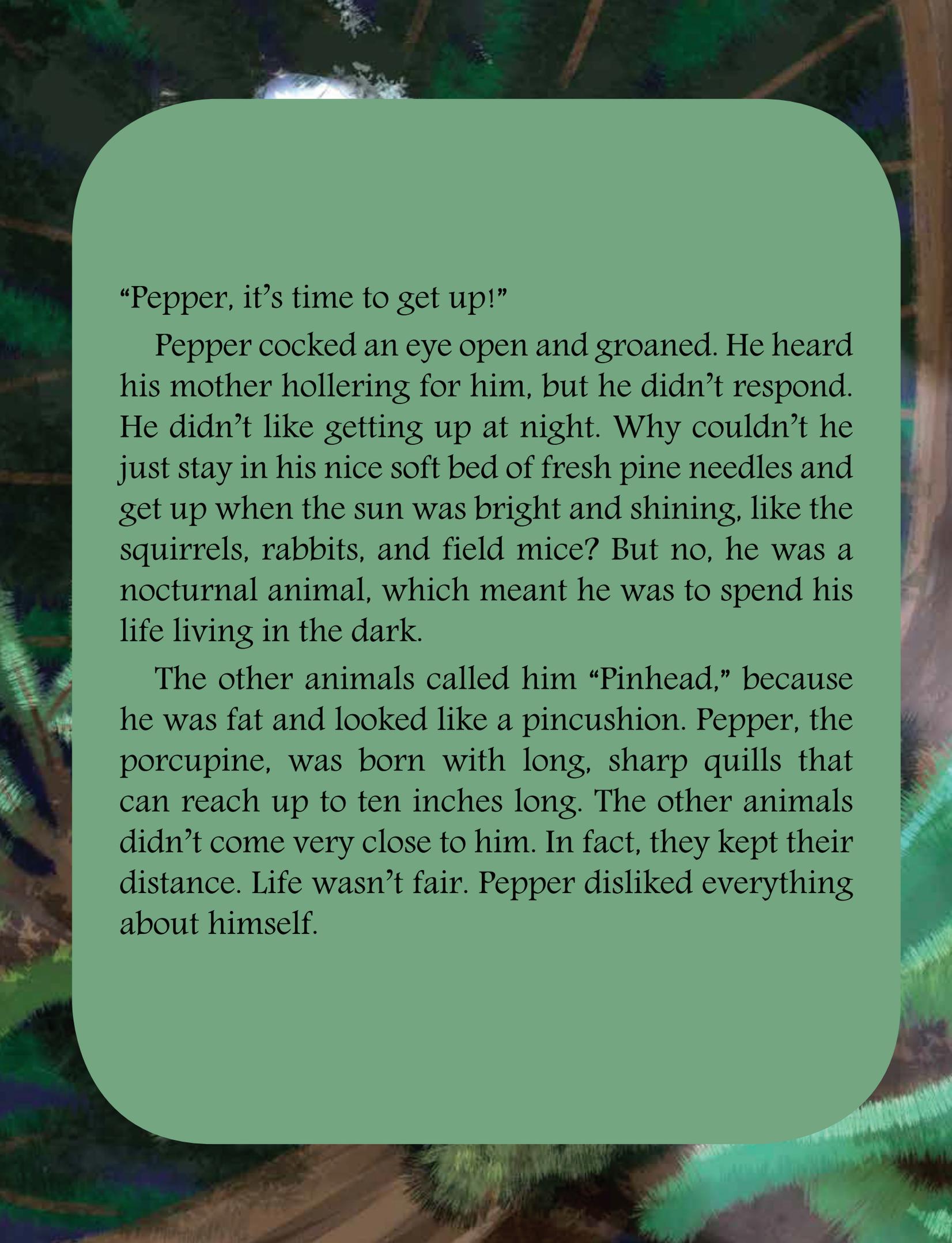
978-1-68314-762-6 (Mobi)

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number:

This Book Belongs To:



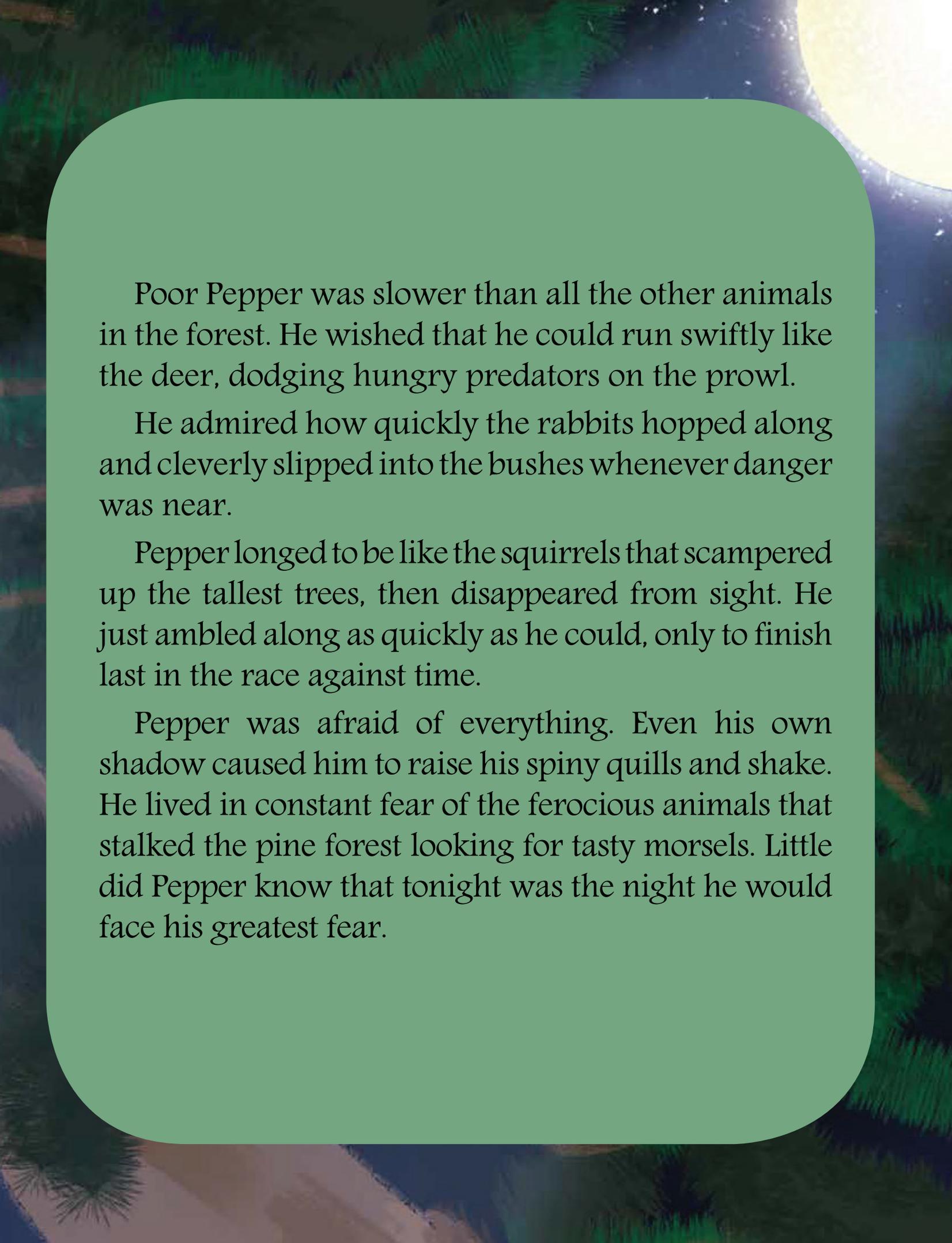


A forest scene with a large green rounded rectangle containing text. The background shows a path, trees, and a small stream.

“Pepper, it’s time to get up!”

Pepper cocked an eye open and groaned. He heard his mother hollering for him, but he didn’t respond. He didn’t like getting up at night. Why couldn’t he just stay in his nice soft bed of fresh pine needles and get up when the sun was bright and shining, like the squirrels, rabbits, and field mice? But no, he was a nocturnal animal, which meant he was to spend his life living in the dark.

The other animals called him “Pinhead,” because he was fat and looked like a pincushion. Pepper, the porcupine, was born with long, sharp quills that can reach up to ten inches long. The other animals didn’t come very close to him. In fact, they kept their distance. Life wasn’t fair. Pepper disliked everything about himself.

A night forest scene with a full moon in the upper right corner, casting a soft glow. The background is dark with silhouettes of pine trees and a path leading into the distance. The text is presented in a light green rounded rectangle.

Poor Pepper was slower than all the other animals in the forest. He wished that he could run swiftly like the deer, dodging hungry predators on the prowl.

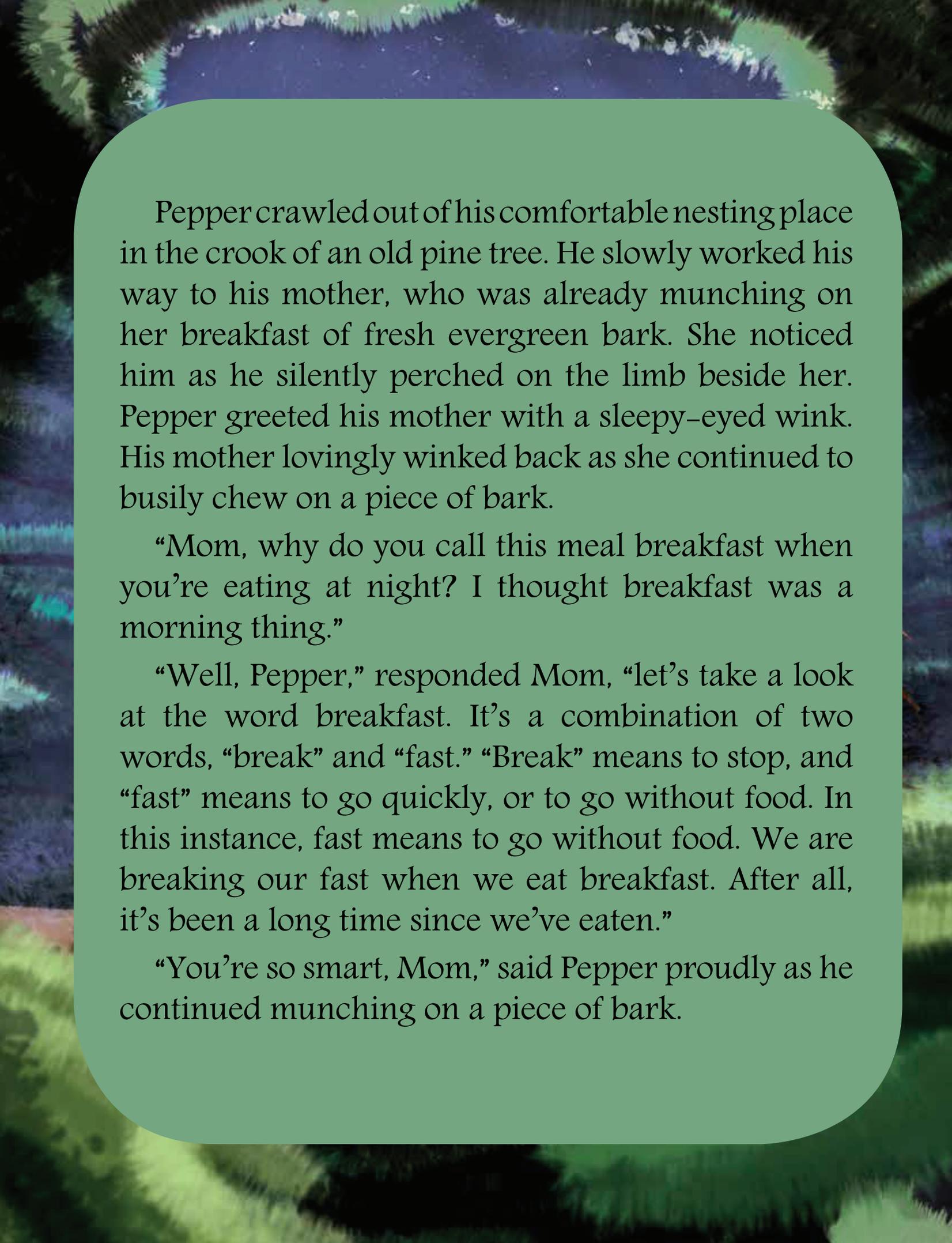
He admired how quickly the rabbits hopped along and cleverly slipped into the bushes whenever danger was near.

Pepper longed to be like the squirrels that scampered up the tallest trees, then disappeared from sight. He just ambled along as quickly as he could, only to finish last in the race against time.

Pepper was afraid of everything. Even his own shadow caused him to raise his spiny quills and shake. He lived in constant fear of the ferocious animals that stalked the pine forest looking for tasty morsels. Little did Pepper know that tonight was the night he would face his greatest fear.







Pepper crawled out of his comfortable nesting place in the crook of an old pine tree. He slowly worked his way to his mother, who was already munching on her breakfast of fresh evergreen bark. She noticed him as he silently perched on the limb beside her. Pepper greeted his mother with a sleepy-eyed wink. His mother lovingly winked back as she continued to busily chew on a piece of bark.

“Mom, why do you call this meal breakfast when you’re eating at night? I thought breakfast was a morning thing.”

“Well, Pepper,” responded Mom, “let’s take a look at the word breakfast. It’s a combination of two words, “break” and “fast.” “Break” means to stop, and “fast” means to go quickly, or to go without food. In this instance, fast means to go without food. We are breaking our fast when we eat breakfast. After all, it’s been a long time since we’ve eaten.”

“You’re so smart, Mom,” said Pepper proudly as he continued munching on a piece of bark.

“Why do we look different from the other animals, and move so slow?”

“What do you mean, Pepper?”

“Well, the other animals call me ‘Pinhead,’ because of the quills that stick out all over. They say I look like a pincushion. Why can’t I be elegant like a buck, or cute like a chipmunk?”

“Pepper, you are one of God’s special creations. You are unique and have qualities that no other animal has. You are loved for who you are. When you think about it, every animal is unique in the way they look and the things they can do.”

“Well, God must have had a sense of humor when he created us, because when other animals look at me, they just laugh and stay away from me. Nobody wants to be my friend.”





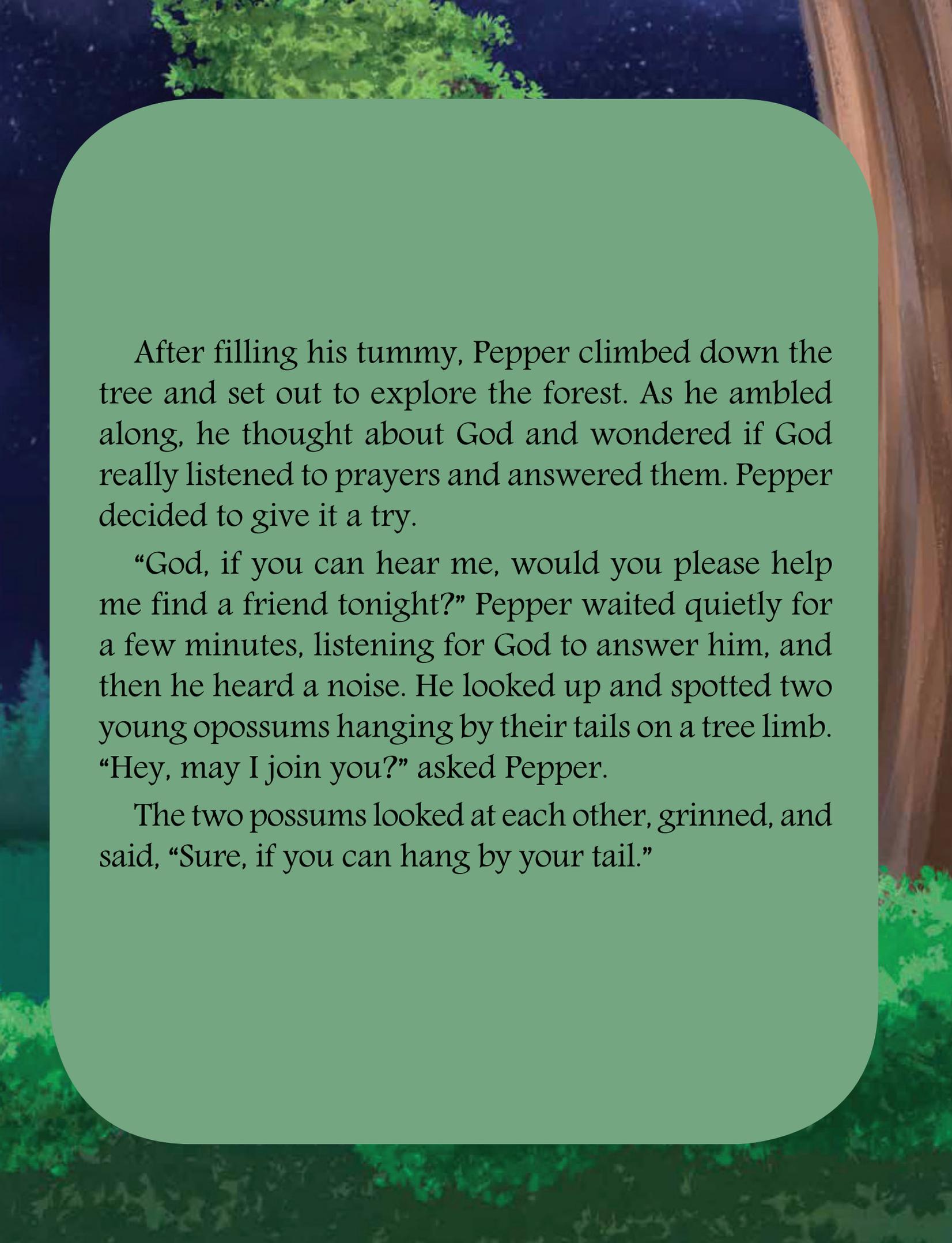
“I love you just the way you are, Pepper, and so does God. When you finish your breakfast, go outside and play. Maybe you’ll make a new friend tonight. Have you thought about asking God to help you find a friend?” Mom asked.

“How do I do that?” asked Pepper.

“It’s simple, just pray,” responded Mom.

“But how do I pray to someone I can’t see?” asked Pepper.

“Just talk to God like you’re talking to me,” answered Mom.



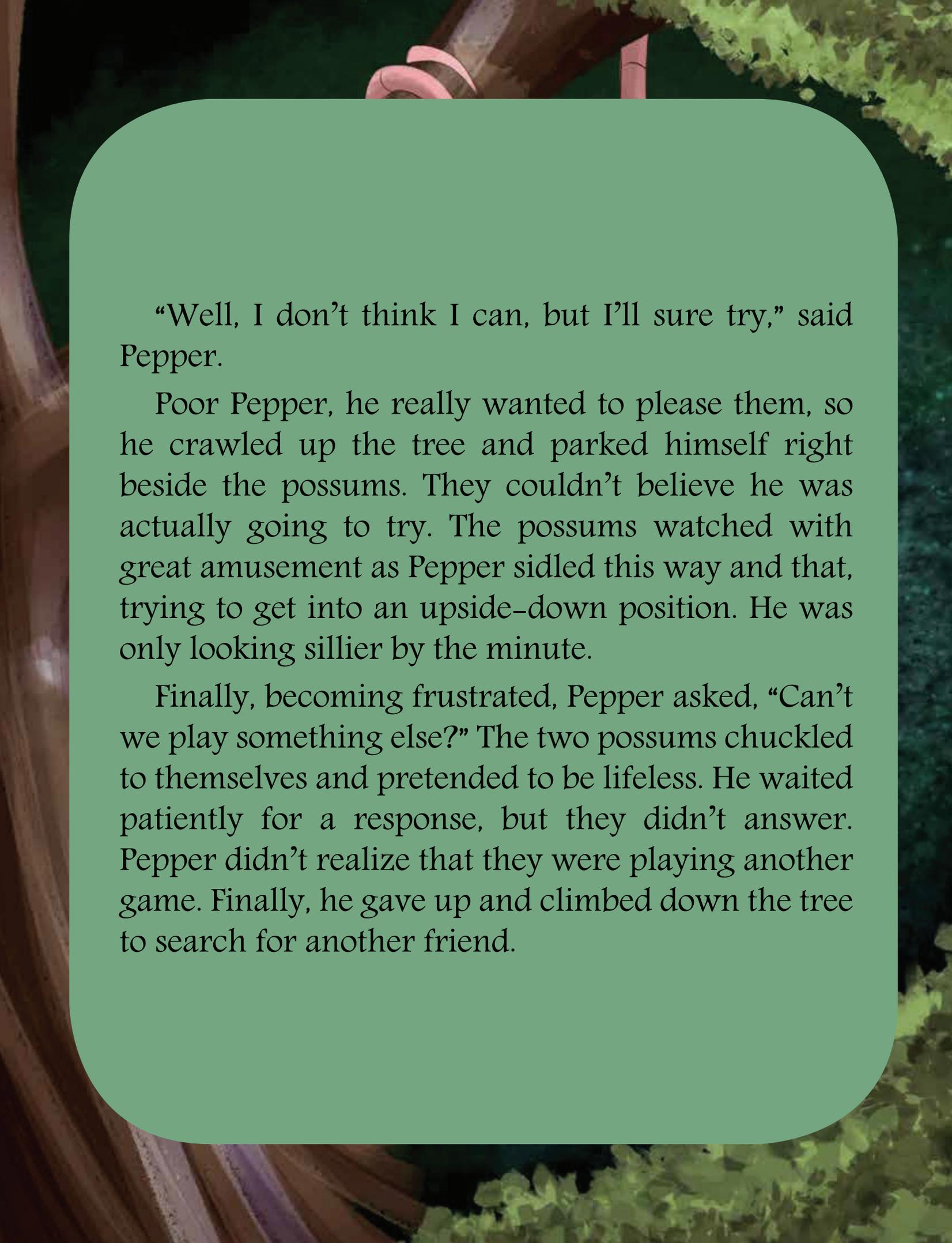
After filling his tummy, Pepper climbed down the tree and set out to explore the forest. As he ambled along, he thought about God and wondered if God really listened to prayers and answered them. Pepper decided to give it a try.

“God, if you can hear me, would you please help me find a friend tonight?” Pepper waited quietly for a few minutes, listening for God to answer him, and then he heard a noise. He looked up and spotted two young opossums hanging by their tails on a tree limb. “Hey, may I join you?” asked Pepper.

The two possums looked at each other, grinned, and said, “Sure, if you can hang by your tail.”



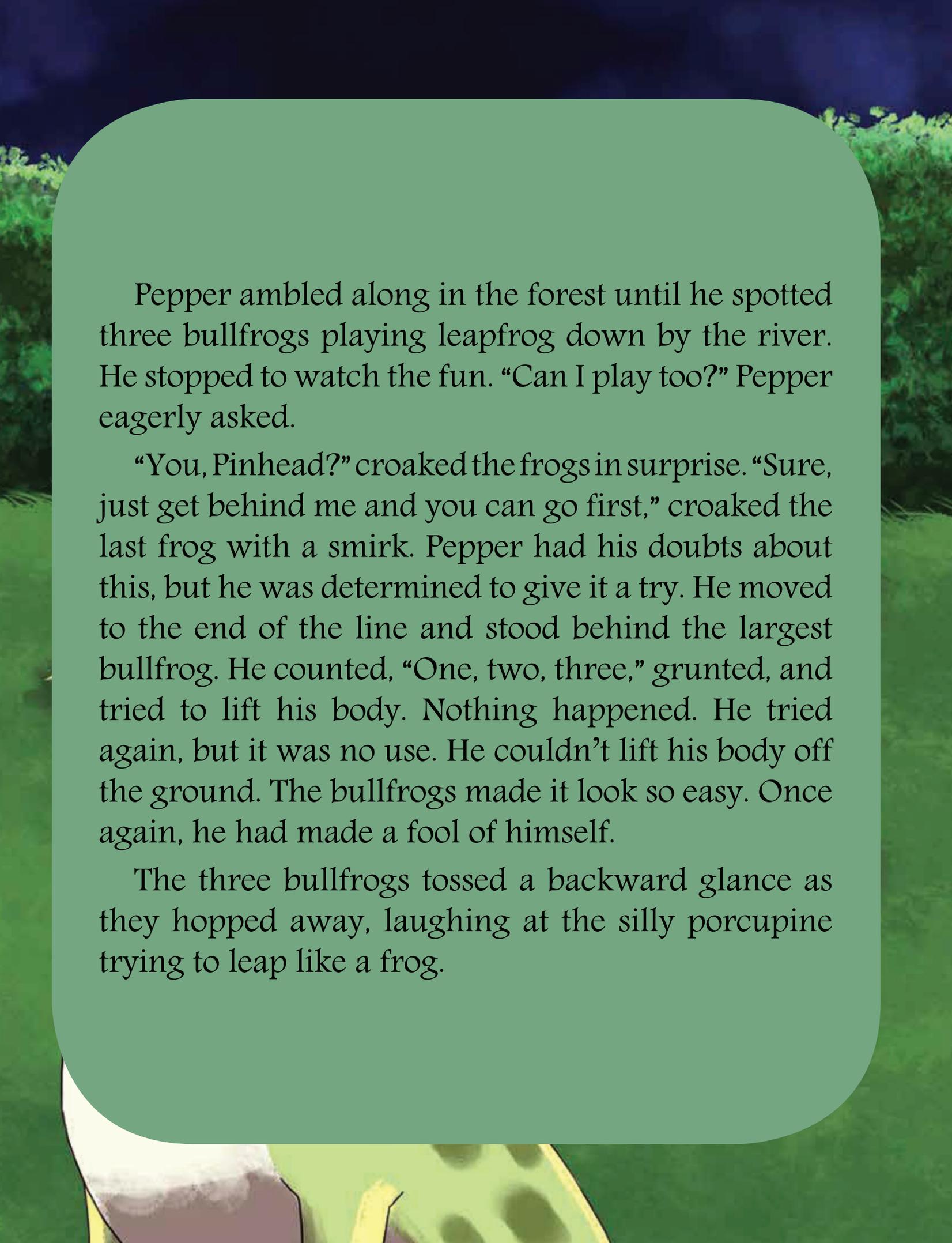




“Well, I don’t think I can, but I’ll sure try,” said Pepper.

Poor Pepper, he really wanted to please them, so he crawled up the tree and parked himself right beside the possums. They couldn’t believe he was actually going to try. The possums watched with great amusement as Pepper sidled this way and that, trying to get into an upside-down position. He was only looking sillier by the minute.

Finally, becoming frustrated, Pepper asked, “Can’t we play something else?” The two possums chuckled to themselves and pretended to be lifeless. He waited patiently for a response, but they didn’t answer. Pepper didn’t realize that they were playing another game. Finally, he gave up and climbed down the tree to search for another friend.



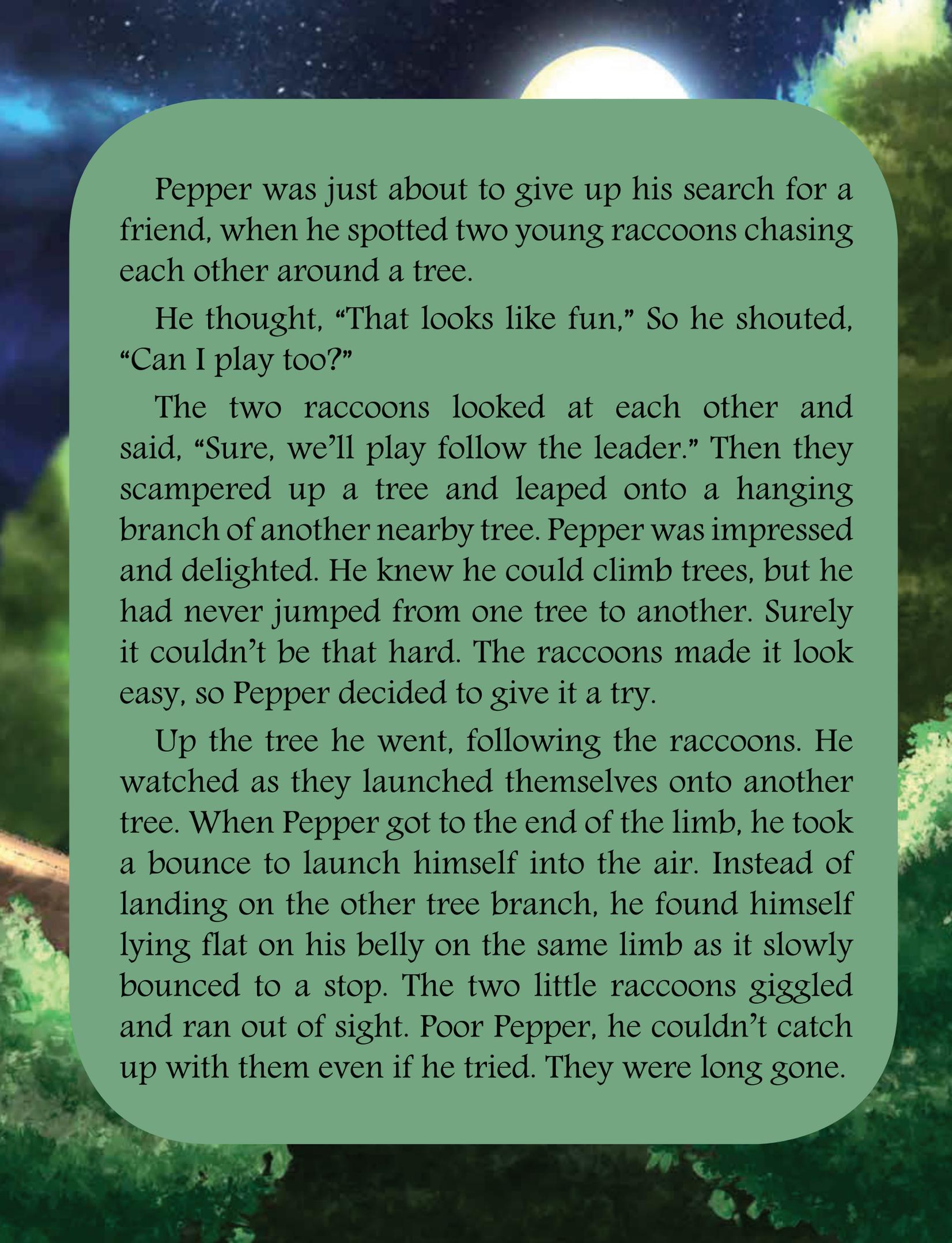
Pepper ambled along in the forest until he spotted three bullfrogs playing leapfrog down by the river. He stopped to watch the fun. “Can I play too?” Pepper eagerly asked.

“You, Pinhead?” croaked the frogs in surprise. “Sure, just get behind me and you can go first,” croaked the last frog with a smirk. Pepper had his doubts about this, but he was determined to give it a try. He moved to the end of the line and stood behind the largest bullfrog. He counted, “One, two, three,” grunted, and tried to lift his body. Nothing happened. He tried again, but it was no use. He couldn’t lift his body off the ground. The bullfrogs made it look so easy. Once again, he had made a fool of himself.

The three bullfrogs tossed a backward glance as they hopped away, laughing at the silly porcupine trying to leap like a frog.







Pepper was just about to give up his search for a friend, when he spotted two young raccoons chasing each other around a tree.

He thought, “That looks like fun,” So he shouted, “Can I play too?”

The two raccoons looked at each other and said, “Sure, we’ll play follow the leader.” Then they scampered up a tree and leaped onto a hanging branch of another nearby tree. Pepper was impressed and delighted. He knew he could climb trees, but he had never jumped from one tree to another. Surely it couldn’t be that hard. The raccoons made it look easy, so Pepper decided to give it a try.

Up the tree he went, following the raccoons. He watched as they launched themselves onto another tree. When Pepper got to the end of the limb, he took a bounce to launch himself into the air. Instead of landing on the other tree branch, he found himself lying flat on his belly on the same limb as it slowly bounced to a stop. The two little raccoons giggled and ran out of sight. Poor Pepper, he couldn’t catch up with them even if he tried. They were long gone.

Sad and discouraged, Pepper decided to give up and go home. All of a sudden something caught his eye. There was movement in the bushes. Thinking that he might have found the raccoons playing hide-and-seek with him, Pepper walked as quickly as he could toward the bush. "Hey," he yelled. "Is that you, raccoons? I found you."

"Sh-h-h-h-h, danger!" whispered the raccoons in unison. Pepper looked around but didn't see anything. He thought they were just playing another trick on him, so he slowly moved away from the bushes feeling sad, and lonely. Once again, he couldn't seem to find a friend. Where was God? Doesn't he answer prayers?





Pepper hadn't gone far when suddenly he heard an angry growl. He turned around and saw a big wolf, pawing at the ground, and sniffing in the bushes where the two terrified raccoons were hiding. Pepper had to do something quick, or the two little raccoons would become the hungry wolf's next meal. He had to think of something fast, but what could he do?

While the wolf was busy trying to figure out a way to get at the terrified raccoons, Pepper slowly and bravely crept toward the wolf. He thought he could sneak up on the unsuspecting wolf and frighten him, but the wolf sensed Pepper's presence. He lifted his head, sniffing the air, then jumped around, facing Pepper with an angry growl.

Terrified, Pepper turned his back to the wolf. He thought that if he couldn't see the wolf, the wolf couldn't see him.

“Hmmm,” thought the wolf, “never mind the raccoons. If I could just flip that porcupine over, it would leave him helpless, and breakfast would be served.” The wolf slowly began to make his move, step-by-step ever so cautiously, careful not to get a mouthful of quills as he crept toward Pepper.

The snap of a twig and the vicious snarl of the wolf, told Pepper that his plan had not worked. He had only fooled himself. Pepper began to shake all over. He was so frightened that his tail began to beat the ground, making a sound like a rattlesnake.

Pepper prayed, “Dear God, if you’re listening, would you please save us from the wolf?”

The hungry wolf slowly and carefully made his way toward his prey. Pepper could sense the nearness of the hungry wolf. Then all of a sudden, out of God-given instinct, he slapped his tail as hard as he could just as the wolf reached out his paw to flip Pepper over.





Pepper heard an angry yelp of pain. He bravely opened his eyes just as the curious raccoons cautiously crept out of hiding. They had heard the wolf yelp in pain and wanted to see what had happened. They were just in time to see the wolf limp away defeated, carrying with him a few of Pepper's quills in his nose and right paw.

The raccoons ran over to Pepper and began chattering excitedly. "Weren't you scared?"

"Did the wolf bite you?"

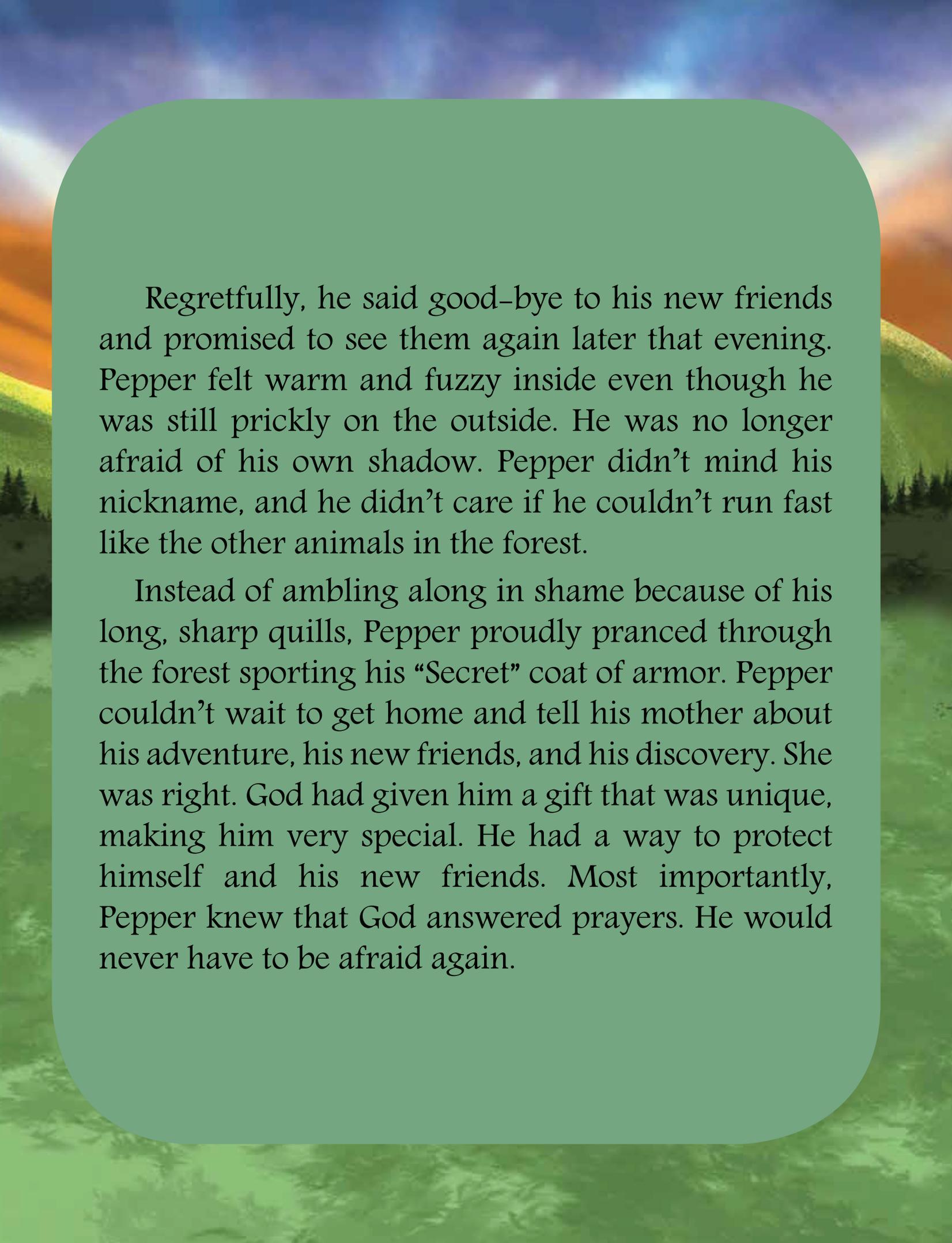
"How did you know what to do?"

"Well, yes, I was scared. I was afraid for you and for me. I knew I had to do something, so I prayed to God. Then all of a sudden, I slapped my tail and the wolf just walked away," Pepper replied modestly.

"Hey, Pepper, would you like to play hide and seek with us?" asked the raccoons.

"I would love to," responded Pepper.

They played for a little while until Pepper noticed that the sky was beginning to get a little lighter in the east. He realized that he needed to get home fast, because his mother might be worried.



Regretfully, he said good-bye to his new friends and promised to see them again later that evening. Pepper felt warm and fuzzy inside even though he was still prickly on the outside. He was no longer afraid of his own shadow. Pepper didn't mind his nickname, and he didn't care if he couldn't run fast like the other animals in the forest.

Instead of ambling along in shame because of his long, sharp quills, Pepper proudly pranced through the forest sporting his "Secret" coat of armor. Pepper couldn't wait to get home and tell his mother about his adventure, his new friends, and his discovery. She was right. God had given him a gift that was unique, making him very special. He had a way to protect himself and his new friends. Most importantly, Pepper knew that God answered prayers. He would never have to be afraid again.





THE END

Glossary

<u>nocturnal</u> :	animals who are active at night
<u>predators</u> :	animals that eat other animals
<u>perched</u> :	sat down
<u>dodging</u> :	run away from
<u>prowl</u> :	walking around looking for food
<u>scampered</u> :	run quickly
<u>ambled</u> :	walk slowly
<u>morsels</u> :	food
<u>sidled</u> :	moving in one direction then another
<u>launched</u> :	lifted their body into the air
<u>unison</u> :	whispered at the same time
<u>regretfully</u> :	doing something you don't want to do

Suggestions for Parents / Readers

When you come across a word that your child doesn't understand, read the sentence again, but leave the word out and substitute another word that would make sense. "What do you think that big word means?"

Questions for Parents / Readers

Why doesn't Pepper like himself?

What did you learn about porcupines that you didn't already know?

How did Pepper show good friendship skills?

What was your favorite part of the book?

What were some lessons Pepper learned in this book?



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