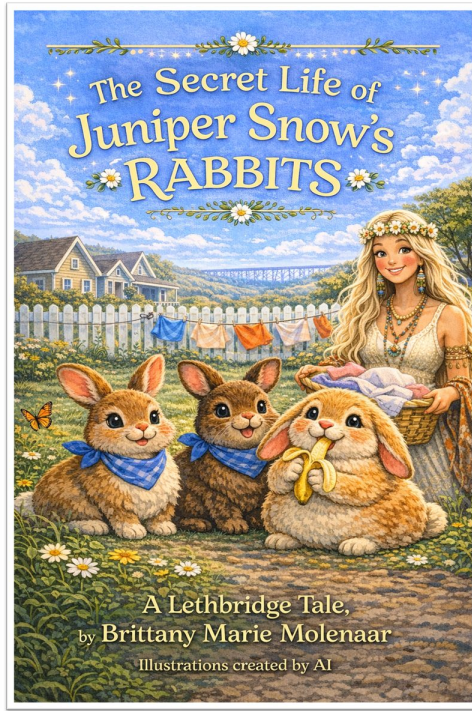


EASY-READER EDITION
Early Reader · Grades 1 – 2



The Midnight Munchers & Crunch & Thunder

A story from "The Secret Life of Juniper Snow's Rabbits" · A Lethbridge Tale

Original story & illustrations by Brittany Marie Molenaar

How to use this reader

This is an easy-reader retelling of the original story, levelled for early readers (Grades 1 – 2). The artwork and the storyline are unchanged — only the words have been simplified to suit the reading level.

Read the words printed under each picture together. The pictures still carry the original art, so point to them as you read.

Every page has a yellow “Sound check” box. These build phonemic awareness — the sounds inside bigger words — which the new Alberta English Language Arts and Literature curriculum emphasizes in the early grades.

At the back, you’ll find Key Words, the characters’ Secret Code Names, talk-about-it questions, and quick sound games — all matched to this level.

Curriculum note: aligned to the Alberta English Language Arts & Literature (2022), organizing ideas for Phonics & Word Knowledge, Phonological Awareness, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension.

SCENE 1



1

The sun came up at Juniper Snow's house. It woke the
pets.

The rabbits wiggled their noses.

It was calm. It was a normal day.

"Roll call!" said a rabbit. "One, two, three, four—"

Wait...

One, two, three, four...

The whole yard froze.

Sound check — Sound it out: morning → m-or-ning. The team 'or' says /or/.

SCENE 2



2

The whole yard froze.

A rabbit spun in fast little circles. The cat blinked and sat up.

She did it again.

She sure did.

They all looked at the far corner. The dirt was dug up.

The hole. It was Mopsy's hole.

"Oh, that silly little rabbit!"

Sound check — In circle the c is soft and says /s/. Chunk it: cir-cle.

SCENE 3



3

That night, the ninja team got ready to go.

Sound check — The team 'oo' in moon says long /oo/. Find another /oo/ word.

SCENE 4



4

"Well," said a brave rabbit, "we know where she went."

"Pebbles' place," said one.

It got very quiet.

"We go in. We get her. We get out."

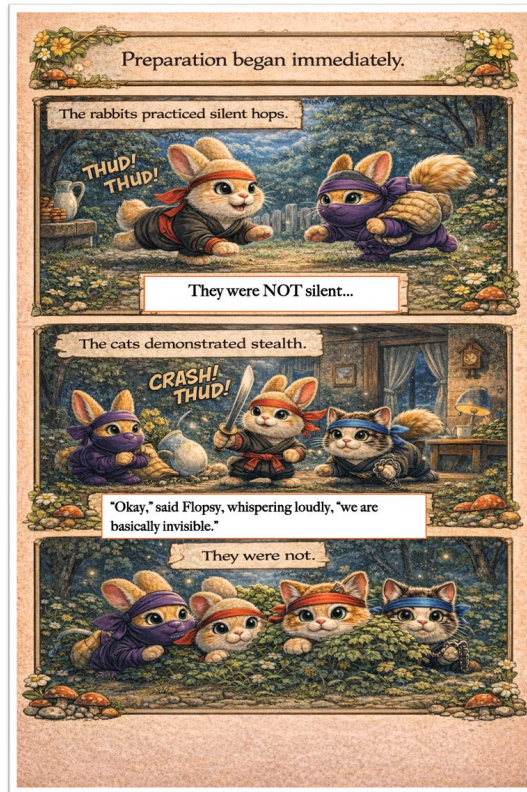
We get back before Juniper Snow sees.

"And home before supper," one whispered.

That part felt important.

Sound check — Blend silence → si-lence. The 'ce' at the end says /s/.

SCENE 5

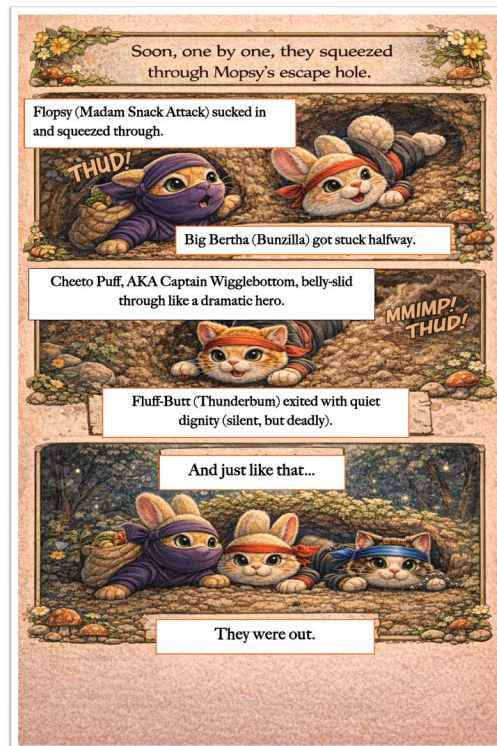


5

They got ready right away.
The rabbits tried quiet hops.
They were NOT quiet!
The cats tried to sneak.
"We are like ghosts," whispered Flopsy.
They were not.

Sound check — Sound out silent: s-i-l-e-n-t. Listen for the /t/ at the end.

SCENE 6



6

One by one, they squeezed through Mopsy's hole.
Flopsy, Madam Snack Attack, squeezed in.
Big Bertha, Bunzilla, got stuck halfway.
Cheeto Puff, Captain Wigglebottom, slid in on his belly.
Fluff-Butt, Thunderbum, slipped out quietly.
And just like that...
They were out.

Sound check — Blend squeezed: s-qu-ee-z-d. 'qu' says /kw/ and 'ee' says /ē/.

SCENE 7



7

The neighbourhood looked like a big, wild jungle.

They crept across the lawns.

A dog barked, and they jumped.

They dodged a sprinkler.

"Why is it SO loud out here?" one whispered.

Sound check — 'spr' is a 3-letter blend. Hear all three: /s/ /p/ /r/.

SCENE 8

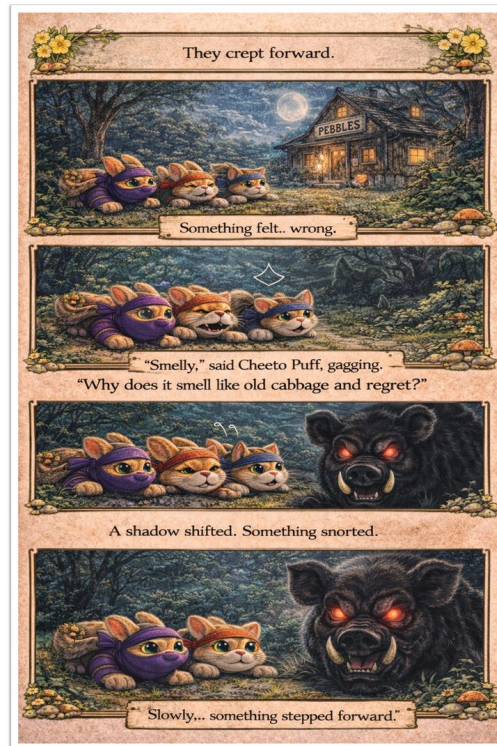


8

At last, they reached Pebbles' place.
The team dropped down low.
"Ninja spots!" shouted Flopsy.
"Quick job," said another. "In and out."
"...home by supper."

Sound check — mission ends with the /shun/ sound. So does 'position'.

SCENE 9



9

The team crept forward.

Something felt wrong.

"So smelly!" said Cheeto Puff.

"Why does it smell so bad?"

A shadow moved. Something snorted.

Slowly, something stepped out.

Sound check — The digraph 'sh' says /sh/. Find 'sh' in shadow and shifted.

SCENE 10

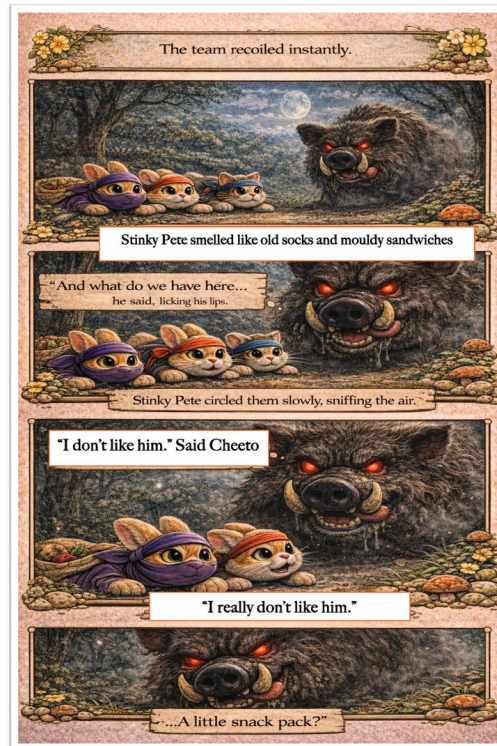


10

"That's not Pebbles," one whispered.
What is that? Not a dog...
It lifted its muddy head and grinned.
"Name's not Pebbles," he said.
A pause.
"It's Stinky Pete."

Sound check — grinned = grin + n + ed. The double n keeps the short /i/.

SCENE 11



11

The team jumped back fast.
Stinky Pete smelled like old socks.
"What do we have here?" he said.
Stinky Pete walked around them, sniffing.
"I do not like him," said Cheeto.
"I really don't like him."
"A little snack pack?"

Sound check — The 'oi' in recoiled says /oy/. Find the 'oi'.

SCENE 12



12

Nobody moved. Then—
The team jumped back.
"I feel sorry now..."
"I came for a snack, not to BE a snack!"
"What do we have here?"
"Retreat! Ninja retreat!"
RUN!

Sound check — retreat has 'ea' = long /ē/. Blend: re-treat.

SCENE 13



13

Chaos! Rabbits ran every way. Cats climbed up high.
Stinky Pete ran after them like a mudslide.

This was a bad plan!

"I will NOT be supper!"

"Retreat! Ninja retreat!"

"We almost got eaten," said Flopsy.

"That was not a rescue."

"Next time, dinner is on me!"

"We were almost at the buffet," said Cheeto Puff.

Sound check — Tricky: chaos starts with 'ch' but says /k/!

SCENE 14



14

Silence. Then— "Mopsy wasn't there."
"Where could she be?" asked Fluff-Butt.
A pause.
THE FARM!!!
Another pause.
"The Gregory Farm."

Sound check — Blend farm: f-ar-m. The team 'ar' says /ar/.

SCENE 15



15

We need to go to the Gregory Farm.

"That's far."

"Like... miss-supper far."

"Juniper Snow is going to KNOW."

"I love Mopsy, but I love supper too. What do we do?"

No one spoke.

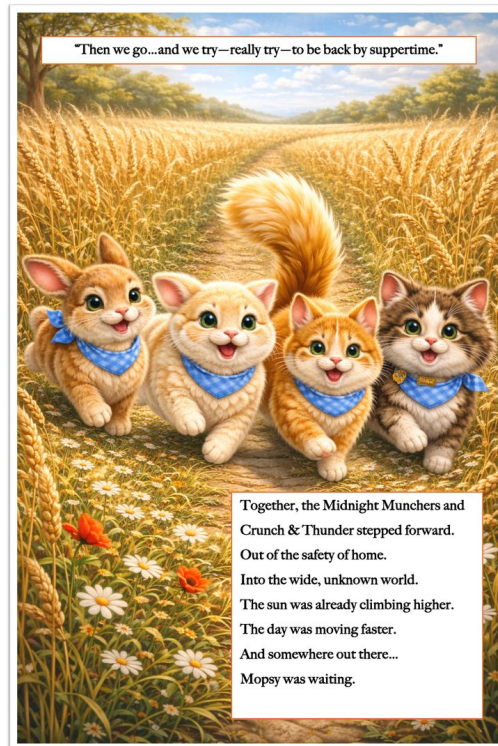
...Mopsy would come for us.

A long pause.

Then, nods.

Sound check — supper has a double p and a short /u/. Split: sup-per.

SCENE 16



16

"Then we go. And we try — really try — to be home by supper."

Together, the Midnight Munchers and Crunch & Thunder stepped out. Out of their safe home. Into the big, wide world. The sun was climbing higher. The day was going fast. And somewhere out there, Mopsy was waiting.

Sound check — climbing = climb + ing. The b stays silent.

SCENE 17



17

As they walked to the Gregory Farm, no one saw the shapes moving in the wheat. No one saw the eyes watching.

They got away from Stinky Pete... but they might not get home by supertime.

TO BE CONTINUED...

Sound check — In wheat, 'wh' says /w/ and 'ea' says long /ē/.

FOR GROWN-UPS & YOUNG READERS

Activity Pages

Key Words to Know

Word	What it means
escape	to get away from something
stealth	moving in a quiet, sneaky way
silence	when everything is very quiet
retreat	to turn around and go back
mission	an important job to do
invisible	cannot be seen at all

Secret Code Names

The rabbits are the Midnight Munchers. The cats are Crunch & Thunder.

Animal	Code name
Flopsy	Madam Snack Attack
Big Bertha	Bunzilla
Cheeto Puff	Captain Wigglebottom
Fluff-Butt	Thunderbum
Mopsy	the runaway bunny they are trying to save
Stinky Pete	the smelly stranger who is NOT Pebbles

Let's Talk About It

Talk about these together. There are no wrong answers — go back to the pictures for clues.

1. Why does the team sneak out of the yard?
2. Name two things that go wrong on the way to Pebbles' place.
3. Who is Stinky Pete, and why don't the animals like him?
4. Where do they decide to go next? Why is it a hard choice?
5. How can you tell the animals are good friends to Mopsy?
6. What do you think will happen at the Gregory Farm?

Play With Sounds

Quick sound games to build phonemic awareness. Say them out loud!

- Blend it: I say the sounds, you say the word — /s/ /n/ /a/ /k/ → snack; /h/ /o/ /l/ → hole.
- Swap a sound: change the /h/ in hop to /t/. What is the new word? (top)
- Digraph hunt: find 'sh', 'ch' and 'th' words in the story (shadow, Cheeto, that).