

SAMMY SKUNK SAVES THE DAY

Charlie Chipmunk's birthday was fast approaching. It was Monday and he was so excited Charlie Chipmunk got out four pieces paper and crayons and drew a picture of a red and blue balloon and then he wrote Please come to my Birthday Party, and added the date and the time and folded it neatly and then last of all he put each invitation into an envelope and sealed it shut. Then he went to deliver the invitations for his birthday party. On the way, he thought about his Mother and wished she could come to celebrate with him.

He put one under Oliver Opossum's log. He put another just near Robert Rabbit's hole. And he shouted across the pond to Billy Beaver. "Come get your invitations to my party."

Last of all Charlie put an invitation into the opening of Sammy Skunk's rock pile.

But as he went back to his burrow, Charlie remembered Sammy Skunk's horrible smell.

"Sammy can't come to my party," he cried. "Whenever he gets scared he lets out that horrible smell. What if he gets scared at my party?"

Charlie Chipmunk remembered the time last spring when he and Sammy Skunk were playing under a tree and a bird dropped a twig that landed right on Sammy Skunk's cute little black nose. Skunk jumped and "Whew!" They had to go play in the meadow.

"Oh no! How could I have forgotten Sammy's smell." Chipmunk cried. He stomped his paw. "Skunk will ruin my party."

Chipmunk raced back to Sammy's rock pile, which took him ten minutes. "Maybe I can get the invitation before he sees it."



But who do you think was peeking out of the rocks with the invitation in his hand? “Hi, Charlie. Thanks for inviting me to your party.”

All week long he sulked. He kicked at his door. “Maybe Sammy will hurt his toe and can’t walk.”

He picked at his food. “Maybe Skunk will get sick and can’t come.”

And he sat in the corner and cried. “This will be my worst birthday party ever.”

The day of his party, Charlie Chipmunk pulled the covers over his head. “Maybe Sammy Skunk will think my birthday is tomorrow,” he wished.

He dilly-dallied putting on his clothes. “Maybe Skink will be late.”

But no such luck. When Charlie Chipmunk peeked out of his burrow Oliver Opossum, Robert Rabbit, Billy Beaver, and Sammy Skunk were waiting for them. Opossum was the one who led them in singing HAPPY BIRTHDAY.

“Shhhhhh,” said Chipmunk. “Loud noises might frighten someone I know.”

“Let’s play hide and seek,” suggested Rabbit.

“No!” cried Chipmunk. “Hiding alone might scare someone I know.”

“Can we play catch?” asked Billy. “Is that all right for someone you know?”

Charlie looked at Sammy. “I guess that’s okay,” he said and tossed the ball softly to Skunk. Sammy tossed it to Oliver. They all stood in a circle and tossed the ball around and around.

Soon Opossum stopped.

“Shhhhhh,” he said. “Do you here what I here?”

“Look!” said Rabbit. “Do you see what I see?”

“Oh no, said beaver. “I see them and here them.”

Chipmunk turned around and saw two coyotes running towards them. He heard the coyotes howl, Aaaaaa aaaaaa aaaaaaarrrrrrr!



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“Help!” squeals Oliver rolling over and playing dead.

“Help!” squeals Robert Rabbit hopping away.

“Help!” squeals Beaver waddling toward the pond. He was scared.

“AAAAAR AAAR AAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRR!”

The coyotes open their mouths and Chipmunk sees their long pointed, sharp, glistening teeth.

“What a birthday,” he cried. “We’re done for.”

Then Charlie Chipmunk heard Skunk hiss. He saw Skunk stamp his feet and raise his tail.

Out it came. Out came Skunk’s horrible smell, worse than a rotten egg, worse than a garbage truck, much much worse than anything you’ve ever smelled before.

“AAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRR”

The coyotes spun around and raced away.

“Yippee! They’re gone,” whooped Oliver Opossum jumping up.

“Hooray for Skunk!” shouted Rabbit hopping gleefully.

“Three cheers for Skunk!” cried Beaver waddling back.

Charlie Chipmunk hugged Skunk. Thank you. Thank you for saving my birthday.”

Then he looked at his friends. Opossum was holding his nose. So were Rabbit and Beaver. Even Skunk was holding his nose.

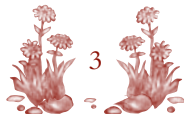
But not Charlie. He breathed in deeply and smiled.

“You know what Skunk? I’m learning to like your smell.”

Then the four friends played more games. The cake was eaten and they watched Charlie Chipmunk open all his presents. Charlie Chipmunk was really sorry to see them leave. Especially he was sorry to see Sammy Skunk go. He realized what a good friend he was.

And he made sure that Sammy came to all his birthday parties from then on.

(Last picture on page 32 should be of Charlie and Sammy as old animals celebrating a birthday with a cake with too many candles to count.)



(716 words)

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Want to see how you did?

SAMMY SKUNK SAVES THE DAY

(title gives the ending away)

By

Ann Whitford Paul

Charlie Chipmunk's (alliterative names—cute!) birthday was fast approaching. (boring first sentence) It was Monday (don't mention a day if you're not going to make your story around all the days of the week—true for months and seasons also. And rewrite so you don't need It was) and he was so excited (telling instead of showing). Charlie Chipmunk got out four pieces paper and crayons and drew a picture of a red and blue balloon and then he wrote Please come to my Birthday Party, and added the date and the time and folded it neatly and then last of all he put each invitation into an envelope and sealed it shut. (too much info before getting into the story—too much description of the invitation—line is way too long to read out loud—don't give specific colors to the illustrator) Then he went to deliver the invitations for his birthday party. On the way, he thought about his Mother and wished she could come to celebrate with him. (not relevant to the story)

He put one (one what? Be specific.) under Oliver Opossum's log. He put (lackluster verbs) another just (jettison the justs) near Robert Rabbit's hole. (lackluster verbs) And he shouted across the pond to Billy Beaver. "Come get your invitation to my party."

Last of all (this phrase was used just two paragraphs above. Come up with something different) Charlie (inconsistent names—if you must have alliterative names, use them throughout) put an invitation into the opening of Sammy Skunk's rock pile.



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But as he went back to his burrow, Charlie remembered Sammy Skunk's horrible smell.

"Sammy can't come to my party," he cried. "Whenever he gets scared he lets out that horrible smell. What if he gets scared at my party?"

Charlie Chipmunk remembered (action moves to the past—in picture books we want all the action to move forward, just as we turn the pages of a book forward) the time last spring when he and Sammy Skunk were playing under a tree and a bird dropped a twig that landed right (what about some fun onomatopoeic words?) on Sammy Skunk's cute (too cute!) little black nose. Skunk jumped and "Whew! They had to go play in the meadow.

"Oh no! How could I have forgotten Sammy's smell." (where is the question mark?) Chipmunk cried. He stomped his paw. (pick one, either the attribution or the action) Skunk will ruin my party."

Chipmunk raced back to Sammy's rock pile which took him ten minutes (delete which and rewrite) "Maybe I can get the invitation before he sees it."

But who do you think was peeking out of the rocks with the invitation in his hand? (change of voice—told in third person, now talking directly to the audience) Hi, (missing beginning quotation mark) Charlie. Thanks for inviting me to your party."

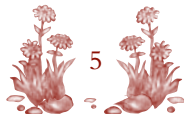
All week long he (who does this pronoun refer to?) sulked. He kicked at his door. "Maybe Sammy will hurt his toe and can't walk."

He picked at his food. "Maybe Skunk will get sick and can't come."

And he sat in the corner and cried. "This will be my worst birthday party ever."

The day of his party, Charlie Chipmunk pulled the covers over his head. "Maybe Sammy Skunk will think my birthday is tomorrow," he wished.

He dilly-dallied putting on his clothes. "Maybe Skink will be late."



But no such luck. When Charlie Chipmunk peeked out of his burrow Oliver Opossum, Robert Rabbit, Billy Beaver, and Sammy Skunk were waiting for them. Opossum was the one who (rewrite without who) led them in singing HAPPY BIRTHDAY.

“Shhhhhh,” said Chipmunk. “Loud noises might frighten someone I know.”

“Let’s play hide and seek,” suggested Rabbit.

“No!” cried Chipmunk. “Hiding alone might scare someone I know.”

“Can we play catch?” asked Billy. “Is that all right for someone you know?”

Charlie looked at Sammy. “I guess that’s okay,” he said and tossed the ball softly to Skunk. Sammy tossed it to Oliver. They all stood in a circle and tossed the ball around and around.

Soon Opossum stopped.

“Shhhhhh,” he said. “Do you here what I here?” (incorrect words—here should be hear)

“Look!” said Rabbit. “Do you see what I see?” (characters all sound the same—don’t have separate personalities)

“Oh no, said beaver. (where is the capital letter for Beaver? And what about quotation marks after no?) “I see them and hear them.”

Chipmunk turned around and saw two (why do we need two—picture books have limited characters—don’t include any that aren’t active participants in the story) coyotes running towards them. He heard the coyotes howl, Aaaaar aaaaar aaaaaaarrrrrrr! (since this part of the story is being told from Chipmunk’s point of view, don’t need to write saw and heard; it’s obvious he’s seeing and hearing it)

“Help!” squeals Oliver rolling over and playing dead. (moves into the present tense)

“Help!” squeals Robert Rabbit hopping quickly (get rid of adverbs that slow your story down—instead look for more active verbs) away.



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“Help!” squeals Beaver waddling toward the pond. (language doesn’t fit the action of the story) “Help!” Beaver waddled to the pond. He was scared. (this telling sentence is unnecessary because it’s already been shown by the earlier sentence)

“AAAAAR AAAAAR AAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRR!”
(make sure the sounds you write read like the sound the animal makes)

The coyotes open their mouths and Chipmunk sees their long pointed sharp, glistening teeth. (too many adjectives)

“What a birthday,” he cried. “We’re done for.” (back in the past tense)

Then Charlie Chipmunk heard Skunk hiss. He saw Skunk stamp his feet and raise his tail. (do we need heard and saw?)

Out it came. Out came Skunk’s horrible smell, worse than a rotten egg, worse than a garbage truck, much much worse than anything you’ve ever smelled before. (purple prose)

“AAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRR”

The coyotes spun around and raced away. (way too easy solution and too predictable)

“Yippee! They’re gone,” whooped Oliver Opossum jumping up.

Hooray for Skunk!” shouted Rabbit hopping gleefully. (delete this adverb—the dialog and action show Rabbit’s glee)

“Three cheers for Skunk!” cried Beaver waddling back. (waddling back where?)

Charlie Chipmunk hugged Skunk. Thank you. Thank you for saving my birthday.” (missing first quotation mark)

Then he looked at his friends. Opossum was holding his nose. So were Rabbit and Beaver. Even Skunk was holding his nose.

But not Charlie. He breathed in deeply and smiled. (logic question—would Charlie really not notice the smell?)

“You know what Skunk? I’m learning to like your smell.”

Then the four friends played more games. The cake was eaten (passive verb) and they watched Charlie Chipmunk open all his presents. Charlie Chipmunk was really (qualifying word) sorry to



WRITING PICTURE BOOKS

see them leave. Especially he was sorry (telling rather than showing) to see Sammy Skunk go. He realized what a good friend he was. (don't need to attach a moral)

And he made sure that Sammy came to all his birthday parties from then on. (ending goes on way too long)

(Last picture on page 32 should be of Charlie and Sammy as old animals celebrating a birthday with a cake with too many candles to count.) (no instructions to illustrator)

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How did you do? Maybe you found even more mistakes than I did.

