

About three days later Mary asked her mother if she could go on a picnic with her doll. “Mom, could you pack a nice big sandwich for me because I’m very hungry. Her mother smiled and soon had Mary was fully equipped for a picnic with a sandwich and fruit and a couple of her favorite cookies.

“Now where are you going young lady?” her mother asked.” I don’t want you to be far away and you must stay on the farm property where I can see you”

“Okay Mama, I’ll be just across the pasture under that large oak tree. It’s safe there and has a nice area to lay out my big blanket and set Monica up against the tree. She can be my companion for my lunch. Monica likes to sit under a tree and so do I. We won’t be long!”

“Okay honey, I can see you from the upstairs window anyway so have fun!”

Mary gathered her blanket in her backpack along with Monica and carried the small lunch basket across the pasture for her favorite spot. All the while she thought she might see the dog-looking animal and the low squatty one with the black and white stripes. *Wouldn’t that be fun, she thought, to see the small animals where they lived?*

She at the oak the arrived and she carefully laid out the blanket and placed Monica against the tree like she always did. “Now Monica,” Mary said with a stern voice. “Don’t make a lot of noise because you may scare the animals away since I think they live around here close by.” Then she made Monica shake her head up and down as if she was saying “Yes I understand, and I’ll be quiet!”

Mary carefully opened her basket and took out the big sandwich her mother had prepared for her. Then she talked to Monica about the two funny-looking animals she had seen the other day running across the pasture. She was amused that they were totally different animals, but they seemed to be friends.

Furball, who was dozing by the front entrance to the burrow slowly awoke to the scent of food which smelled wonderful. It had to be close by, so he poked his head up and looked over the entrance of his burrow at the young girl she was sitting about thirty feet away under a tree. There was another person sitting against the tree that never moved, which seemed odd to him. He ducked back inside just as the girl looked up and saw him.

“Oh, my goodness” He thought, very quietly as he slid back into the burrow. *“What if that young person saw me and wants to kill me?”*

So Furball ran through the connecting tunnel and then tumbled into Benny’s chamber. He landed with a thud on top of the badger. Benny, who was in the middle of a great dream, jumped sideways as the coyote started babbling about a young girl outside the burrow.

“What are you doing Furball!” Benny said very loudly. “You really scared me you fool!”

“Benny, you will not believe it, but that young girl from the farmhouse is sitting outside the burrow and eating something that smells very good! There’s another person sitting there with her, but it is not moving and doesn’t say anything. Do you think the other person is dead! It’s strange, Benny!” The excited coyote exclaimed!

“You are saying the girl from the farmhouse is sitting outside the burrow right now? And there is someone else with her? Are you sure she saw you Furball? That could be scary if she did because then we are not safe here. She may tell her father where we are!”

“I know she saw me because she smiled at me and seemed to wave something in her hand that looked like food to me!”

“Furball, everything you look at seems like food to you! Maybe I should have a look myself just to make sure.”

Benny slowly moved towards the entrance of the burrow and quickly peeked over the mound of dirt. Sure enough, there was the girl he had seen at the farmhouse eating a sandwich and talking to a small person sitting against the tree. As he lay there looking, she suddenly looked up and saw Benny. He quickly retreated into the burrow and thought about going out the other end of the tunnel. Then he heard a giggle and a voice that began to sing the same song he had heard when she was picking berries. He stopped and slid back to the entrance and noticed the girl had moved closer and had thrown a part of her sandwich in front of the burrow. Benny was now very afraid that it might be a trap so retreated further into the tunnel.

“Furball.” Benny exclaimed. “I think she just threw some food in front of the entrance! I’m afraid it might be a trap, so we need to be very careful about reaching for it!”

“Food! I’m so hungry I don’t care, Benny!” Furball exclaimed, and he raced up the tunnel and grabbed part of the sandwich by the entrance. Then he turned quickly and ran back where Benny was hidden. “Look Benny, food and it tastes great. Here take some for yourself!”

Both the animals smiled and quickly ate the piece of sandwich the young girl had thrown at them. Soon they heard a voice from across the pasture calling the girl's name. The young girl answered and packed up her basket and turned to leave. As she did so she looked back and smiled at the two animals who stared at her from the entrance to the burrow. They seemed to be waiting for some more food. She reached into her basket and tossed the remaining part of her sandwich to them.

One night, Furball and Benny were looking for food and discovered that the coyote had an increased sense of smell and could detect the presence of small animals. If they were hiding, underground, or at the base of trees in the forest, Benny would dig furiously under the tree or into the burrow and chase the animal out the other side where furball would catch them.

On the way back to their own burrow, Furball looked at Benny and said "Benny this is a great way to hunt. I can smell the prey and you can dig the hole and scare them out!"

Benny looked at furball with a smile on his face and said, "yes furball that's a great idea and will do it again in a couple nights after we get some sleep today."

The two friends continued and happily climbed into their burrow to sleep during the day, and to go out again at night to hunt for food. This became the routine for the two friends to roam the woods looking for prey.

One morning Furball got up early to scout through the woods and looked for possible places where they could hunt. Then he and Benny could find some prey for the next night. He let his friend sleep because he was the one doing all the digging

while they were hunting. Furball knew he was tired from the work he did the night before.

He sensed there were other animals in the area. He could smell they were coyotes! Furball hid behind a bush but in an instant a large male coyote confronted him and bared its teeth with a throaty growl. Furball instinctively growled back but continued to back up towards his burrow that was 100's of yards away.

Then he noticed other coyotes that emerged from the underbrush. There were about 10 of them with older females and some young males and females. Their leader approached Furball slowly as he seemed to gauge whether the other coyote would just run away. He prepared to charge Furball who, while fully grown, had never been in a fight and this dominant male was very frightful.

About that time, Benny, who was enjoying a nice dream in his burrow began hearing growling and snapping teeth somewhere outside their home. He first looked around for Furball and noticed the coyote was gone. He crept to the entrance of the burrow and looked around to see what had happened to his friend. Benny could hear Furball and another strange male coyote growling and snapping its teeth. Benny ran in the direction of the noise and saw a dominant male as he prepared to charge his friend.

Benny saw that his friend was in trouble and without a second thought, charged across the forest floor and ran headlong into the surprised coyote. It turned and ran when it saw Benny's sharp claws and bared teeth and heard this scary sound of the badger as it ran directly at him.

Suddenly there was a gun shot and two men emerged from the woods and fired their guns at the fleeing coyotes. Both Benny and Furball quickly ducked back under some brush and lay still as the other coyotes scattered through the woods.

“That was scary with the large coyote and then the men with guns that shot at them!” Furball exclaimed as he shook with fear. I hope the men didn’t see us hiding and don’t come after us also!”

“I know Furball, that was a close call, first with the large coyote and then the men and their guns. It’s been a very scary day for sure! I think we should hide out here until we think it might be safe and then go back outside to see if anyone was hurt”

After an hour they knew the men had left, so the two friends sneaked out the back exit of the burrow and carefully looked around.

Benny saw something moving and went there to investigate. It was a small coyote and it seemed to be unconscious. “Furball, I think this young coyote hit his head on this branch and knocked himself out. I think we should drag it back into our and burrow to keep it safe in case the men do come back!”

The friends dragged the unconscious coyote, to the safety of the burrow. It was then they realized that the coyote was a young female. Furball poked the coyote to see if he could wake her up. She slowly opened her eyes and let out a loud yip and so then tried to run away but Benny blocked the exit. She realized there was no escape so she bit Furball.

“Ouch,” He yelled, “That hurts! We saved you and that’s what you do; Bite me! She then started to cry, but he grabbed her, and she lay still in one of the sleeping areas.

Furball, and Benny tried to talk to her and calm the young coyote down. It was obvious she was terrified being in a strange place and looking at the ferocious black and white striped creature with long claws and sharp teeth. Furball understood her fear and gently moved her to an area that was away from Benny. When the two coyotes were in a separate part of the burrow, Furball asked her gently “What’s your name?”

Nervously, the young coyote said, “Camille, at least that’s what they call me. What’s your name?”

“My friend here is called Benny, and he calls me Furball because that’s what I looked like when I was just born. I know that sounds funny, but that has been my name as long as I have lived. I really like it because it was given to me by my best friend, the badger.”

“I’ve never seen a badger before, and he looks very mean and dangerous!” she said very nervously.

“No, Camille; He’s my friend because we grew up together in this burrow. We even hunt together and are good at finding food to eat. Maybe you can come along and watch us one night soon. For now, you should rest because you really hurt your head when you hit that branch. It must have been scary when the men started to shoot at you.”

Camille seemed to be calmer and in a very sweet way, reached out her paw to touch Furball on the cheek and say, “it’s nice to know you Furball.” She looked down the tunnel and saw the badger as he sat and watched the two coyotes. “It’s also nice to meet you as well Benny!”

Benny sat back and watched the two coyotes talk to each other and smiled that his friend had found another coyote. Perhaps she might become his mate one day. But as he smiled, Benny thought to himself, it would be nice if there was another badger that would be his mate. They could hunt together and maybe even have a family of their own.

All three animals were exhausted by the day's activities and curled up in a ball and went to sleep. At one point in the middle of the night, Benny awoke and looked at the two coyotes who were cuddled together as if they were one.

After a few days of hunting together, Benny knew that Camille and Furball were going to be together forever. He knew they might soon decide to leave him and go away to start a life on their own. This made him sad, but also happy for his friend.

For the next month, the three animals hunted together as a team and were very successful in feeding themselves. It became more evident that both Camille and Furball would be a couple for life.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Where did Mary go for her picnic?
2. What is the name of Mary's doll?
3. What did Furball smell that woke him up?
4. What did Furball do to wake up Benny?
5. What did Mary throw in front of the burrow?
6. What did Furball do when he saw the piece of sandwich?
7. How did the Badger and Coyote hunt together?
8. When Furball was in the woods what other animals did he find there?
9. When Benny heard the fight what did he do to help his friend?
10. Men came out of the woods. What did they do to the coyotes?
11. What type of animal did Benny and Furball find after the men left?
12. What was the name of the young coyote they found in the forest.

QUESTIONNAIRE ANSWERS

1. Where did Mary go for her picnic?

Across the pasture to the old oak tree.

2. What is the name of Mary's doll?

The doll's name was Monica

3. What did Furball smell that woke him up?

Something that smelled like food

4. What did Furball do to wake up Benny?

Furball ran to Benny and jumped on him

5. What did Mary throw in front of the burrow?

Part of her sandwich

6. What did Furball do when he saw the piece of sandwich?

He ran out of the burrow to grab the sandwich

7. How did the Badger and Coyote hunt together?

Benny dug at the front of a burrow and Furball went to the other end to catch the animals that came out.

8. When Furball was in the woods what other animals did he find there?

He found a group of coyotes

9. When Benny heard the fight what did he do to help his friend?

He charged into the large coyote who ran away from the badger

10. Men came out of the woods. What did they do to the coyotes?

They shot at the coyotes

11. What type of animal did Benny and Furball find after the men left?

They found a young coyote that had hit her head

12. What was the name of the young coyote they found in the forest.

Her name was Camille