

GOOD NEWS FOR LITTLE HEARTS

WHEN YOU MEET A BULLY

Gus Gets Badgered

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As summer turned to fall, the leaves of the Great Maple turned into a canopy of red. It hung over Gus, who was sitting in the grass, waiting for his friends to arrive.

From across the pond, Gus watched them barrel down the path at full speed. With swift, strong legs, Wesley soared into first place, skidding to a stop, scratching the stoop with his sharp claws. Jax and Manny followed close behind.

"Wesley, you weren't kidding!" said Gus. "You really are fast!"



Just then, the front door opened and out walked Gus's mom.
"Good morning, gang!" She immediately noticed the new badger and said,
"You must be Wesley! Gus told me all about you. How do you like the meadow?"

"It's fine," said Wesley. "There are more cubs here than at my last meadow."

"Well, I'm glad you can all be friends!" she replied. "Now, before you all head out, some snacks for the road." She reached into her apron pocket and set a small pouch in each animal's paw. She then pinched Gus's cheek and said, "Fresh elderberry cookies for my growing cub!"

"Mom . . ." Gus blushed. But he wouldn't dare turn down Mom's cookies. They were the best!



As the gang set out through the tall grass and fallen leaves, Wesley asked, "So what do you cubs do here for fun?"

"Our meadow is perfect for hide-and-seek!" said Gus.

Jax and Manny were about to agree but hesitated when they noticed Wesley's side-eye.



"Hide-and-seek is for babies," said Wesley. "Let's play blind-cub's-bluff. Gus will be It." He then blindfolded Gus and spun him around.

He patted Gus on the belly and joked, "It shouldn't be hard to outrun this growing cub!" Jax and Manny laughed.

Soon they all ran circles around Gus. They called out his name and over and over dodged his attempts to catch them. Gus panted and felt exhausted. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't catch them.

