

The Otter who lost his Favourite Pebble

<image #1 Burdock the otter is fishing in the pond and has his favourite pebble. The weather in the background is glorious and the scene is happy / positive. However in the background you can visibly see a mysterious set of eyes watching in the background, either in the dark forest or hiding behind a rock / some grass.

No dragonfly on this illustration.>

*Brought to you by Hector's Post
Illustrated by _____*

The Otter who lost his Favourite Pebble

*Dedicated to Elizabeth and Edward. May
reading light the fire of your imagination
and bring you company whenever you are
alone.*

*Written by
Illustrated by
Published when & where
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Etc
Etc
Etc
Etc*

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Down by the river, along the way, the sun is shining on another beautiful day.

Burdock and his siblings are wide awake. They run through the grass and slide down the path. To the water's edge they happily snake.

“Slow down!” says Mama Otter.

<image #2 An idyllic and glorious sunny morning on the river – there is a pond that keeps the local community well-stocked in fish. The focus is on the young otters – especially Burdock who is distinguishable from the others due to his clothing [e.g. hat, bow-tie, waistcoat, cravat] and because he is holding a special pebble – as they jump and play down towards the river bank followed by their 'harassed' mum [bigger than the other otters and with feminine features]. Nettle the beaver is looking sleepy as she comes out of her lodge and yawns showing off her teeth. A crane bends his long neck down to clean his feathers.

Please include a blue dragonfly.>

Nettle the beaver comes out of her lodge, her home underneath. She yawns so widely. Just look at those teeth!

Crane stretches his wings with a morning song. He cleans his feathers with his neck so long.

The young otters' tummies begin to grumble. That's what we call the breakfast rumble!

What food do each of the animals need? The frogs will eat flies and the ducks will eat weed. Nettle will undoubtedly chew through some wood. But for Crane and the otters, well, some fish would be good!

<image #3 At the water's edge the young playful otters are hungry – some rub their rumbling tummies. The animals look perplexed at the lack of fish. Mama Otter looks thoughtfully confused. Burdock the otter has his paws in the water frowning in outrage! Where are HIS fish? (He has his pebble with him.) There are two sets of eyes in the dark trees in the background (belonging to the bear cubs)

Please include an orange dragonfly.>

“But where are the fish that taste so yummy?” says Burdock the otter. “The river is empty and so is my tummy!”

Just then, there's a SPLASH! And a very loud GNASH-GNASH! Whatever could it be?

Burdock is cross. “Why, that stranger has made such a fuss, there's nothing left for us! Not a fin or a tail! Not a bone or a scale!”

So they all went hungry that morning.

<image #4 Burdock and the others have run upstream and are surprised to find a big brown bear jumping in the water, catching fish and making a big commotion. SPLASH! The bear [female, big] is very happy. There is already a pile of fish ready to eat. A bear cub paw is just sneaking a fish away (it is not obvious they are bear cubs yet – it is for the readers to spot and talk about: who could that be?)

Yellow dragonfly>

Burdock and the others hurry up shore where they see something they have never seen before!

It's BIG and it's brown. And it splashes around.
It makes such a mess, the fish are distressed!
Those not gobbled up, have all swum away!

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The friends were in trouble from this burdensome beast, who's come to their river to feast on their fish. Burdock is thoughtful and he's starting to plan. He'll make the beast leave, if he possibly can.

<image #5 On the riverbank, Burdock, Crane and Nettle hold a secret meeting hidden in the bushes. Burdock frowns in thought. Nettle bares her teeth and tries to look aggressive – somewhat unsuccessfully [he looks friendly / cuddly]. Crane stands up tall and spreads his wings to look as big as he can but he still looks delicate like a ballerina [graceful and petite]. The bear cubs are there in the dark bushes behind them, looking at them curiously – we can just make out their faces now.

Green dragonfly.>

“I'll show her my teeth!” says Nettle the beaver.

“I'll spread out my wings,” says Crane, rather eager.

“What good will that do?” says Burdock the otter. “She's bigger than you, and her teeth are too!”

“She's different from us and I don't like her one bit!” says Burdock the otter, unwilling to quit.

<image #6 Burdock pulls back some leaves to look out at Lily the bear as she takes a well-earned rest from fishing and sits down to eat some of her fish. We can see her BIG dangerous claws and her SHARP dangerous teeth as Burdock and the others look on. They see her as a THREAT but she looks kind of cuddly.

Red dragonfly. >

So he thought long and hard, and then harder still.

It was true she was bigger and looked very strong, but there must be a way to make her be gone!

The Otter who lost his favourite pebble

There's so many of us, and just one of her...

“I've got it!” he says.

“We'll gather as one to give her a scare.
Together we're stronger than one silly old
bear!”

<image #7 A montage as Burdock, Crane and Nettle collect sticks, roll in mud and threw leaves at each other to look like one big scary monster. They are actually having fun but a nearby mouse has fainted at the sight of them. We can see the bear cubs again and this time they are laughing at the others having fun too – they are not scared.

Orange dragonfly. >

So they look all around and gather up sticks. They roll in the mud and add leaves to the mix. They look very scary and rather surreal. It's surely enough to make anyone squeal!

With Crane at the top and Nettle at the bottom,
Burdock believes no one could stop 'em.
Full of confidence, they step out, into the light.
They're so sure she's wrong, and they're in the right.

<image #8 The mud & stick totem monster steps out from the trees (Nettle, Burdock and Crane standing on top of each other) and into the river to scare Lily the bear. She is so alarmed she is backing onto the river's dam – where it breaks with a SNAP! The bear cubs on the riverbank look alarmed too.

White dragonfly. >

For Lily the bear it was indeed a surprise.
And maybe one that was not very wise...

“Get away!” she cried in genuine fear and
stepped back abruptly until... oh dear!

Oh my goodness! What have they done?
 The dam is knocked over and all come undone!
 The water is leaking, it's flowing downriver!
 Their watery home will become nothing but a
 sliver...

<image #9 A scene of ALARM as ALL the animals look in horror as the river quickly flows over the broken dam threatening to empty their idyllic home. The totem monster is half washed off now and so it is clear it is Burdock and friends. Burdock's special pebble has dropped as well and is clearly fallen into the water unnoticed while he stares in horror at the broken dam. The bear cubs come to cuddle near their mother for reassurance. This is a disaster for the WHOLE community.

Brown dragonfly. >

Nowhere to swim and no fun to find!
 And more importantly, no fish left behind!
 Burdock is worried. What should he do?

“Quick! Help me mend it!” says Lily the bear.

“This resource is precious and we must defend it!”

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Quickly they gather to rebuild the dam.
 Quickly, together, as a team, yes they can.
 The big and the small. The old and the young.
 They all come together to get the work done.

“I'm sorry,” says Burdock, “That we gave you a scare. We were being selfish and it just wasn't fair. The river's not ours and we must learn to share.”

<image #10 The animals all work together to fix the broken dam – a long line stretches back to pass sticks and mud to Nettle who is the one fixes it at the gap. Including the two bear cubs near their mum - Lily and Burdock are the nearest to Nettle. As they pass materials, Burdock looks up to Lily to say sorry and she looks down to him to reply.

Indigo dragonfly.>

Lily nods her great head at what Burdock has said.
 “Change can be scary when you must adapt what you do, but we can be friends, I am sure that is true. I won't take all the fish, we'll share with you too.”

With the dam fully fixed, all can relax. Time to consider, and look at the facts. This wonderful world is full of different things. Burdock has webbed feet and Crane has his wings. Nettle has special jaws and Lily has big claws.

<image #11 The river is back to how it was. Everyone is relaxing and enjoying life. The young otters climb all over the bear cubs who laugh and roll around, all having fun. Nettle looks at them wary as she sits on her dam. Crane happily watches fish swim between his feet. Lily hands Burdock his special pebble that he lost when the dam broken. He is very grateful. A blue happy sky is clearly visible.

Grey dragonfly.>

So much apart but so much the same. Life can be tricky but there's no one to blame. We're all here on Earth, under one sky. We're all here together, whether we swim, crawl, or fly. Help is what's needed, and kindness too. It's up to us all to see what we can do.

Interesting Facts

- Beavers use trees, mud and stone to build their lodge on water in order to store food and provide security from predators.
- The largest dam consists of thousands of trees, and can be seen from space ***Have you ever tried to dig a moat at the seaside?***
- Brown bears hibernate for up to 6 months during the winter when food is scarce. Incredibly they don't go to the toilet at all during this time.
- ***How many types of bear can you name? [answer: brown bears, black bears, pandas, sloth bears, sun bears, polar bears, spectacled bears]***

*<image
#12 of beaver
building a
dam>*

- Bears can run up to 40mph, ***do you think you could keep up?***
- They are also intelligent, being known to use camouflage when hunting and roll in mud to hide their scent.
- Otters use rocks to crack open clams, and keep their favourite rock in loose skin under their armpits.
- For fun they can juggle rocks or, sometimes build slides to play on.
- Otters can hold their breath for up to 8 minutes, ***how long can you hold yours for?***
- Otters like to stick together so when they sleep will wrap themselves together with weed and float as a raft.
- In Bangladesh otters have been trained by fishermen to herd fish into the waiting nets. ***Would you want an otter as a pet?***

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Jokes

Why did the otter cross the road.

To get to the otter side!

Where does an otter store money?

In the river bank!

What did the beaver say to the tree?

It's been nice gnawing you!

*<image
#13 of otter
crossing a
road>*

The Otter who lost his favourite pebble

What do you call a wet bear?

A drizzly bear

What do you call a bear with no ear?

B

Why do bears have fur coats?

Because they would look silly in an anorak!

*<image
#14 of bear
wearing an
anorak>*

Fun Puzzles and Tasks

Can you count how many animals live by the river?

If Lily eats two fish per day, and the two cubs each eat one fish per day, then how many fish do they all eat in total per week?

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Can you draw a picture of a beaver, just like Bella?

*<image
#14 of
dragonfly>*

Can you spot the dragonfly on every page?

What word is spelt by joining the first letter of the colour of each dragonfly? For example a green dragonfly denotes the letter 'g'.

1) Blue – Orange – Yellow, 2) Green – Red – Orange – White, 3) Brown – Indigo – Grey

Coming Soon

Excited to bring to you...

All Bee and No Buzz – *Our hero Lavedar loses her buzz and goes on a quest to find it.*

Hector Becomes a Postman – *The story of how our friend Hector becomes a Postman.*

Moles up to Mischief – *Uhoh, the naughty moles are creating chaos!*

Rear Cover

<image #1 continued Burdock

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