

# Petey's Secret Power

by Mary Maden

Illustrated by Tana Brinnand

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Last Time: Petey Squirrel's sleep is disturbed by loud noises. The little squirrel goes looking for the source of the noise. Petey braves the dangerous mud holes and briar bushes in the deep forest. Finally, Petey discovers the cause of the noise. !



## Chapter Two

### Bubba Bear's Big Time Band

“Gotcha!” Bubba Bear said as he caught the hysterical little squirrel just before he hit the mud. “Calm down, little buddy. The mud won't kill you. You might never get the stink off you, but you won't die.”

The big bear held Petey in his strong grip and scowled at him. “Just what do you think you're doing spying on us?” Bubba Bear demanded. “Sizing up the competition, huh?”

Two smaller bears named Benny and Jimmy came up and stood behind Bubba Bear. The three bears looked suspiciously at the little squirrel.

“I bet the Treetop Trio sent him!” Jimmy Bear cried.

“I don't know what you're talking about. I don't know who or what the Treetop Trio is,” Petey argued. “And I wasn't spying...not really. I was just trying to find out what was making all that noise!”

“Do you expect me to believe that you weren't spying for the Treetop Trio? They know that Bubba Bear's Big Time Band is the one to beat!” Bubba Bear growled. “And we were making music, not noise, thank you very much!”

“What's Bubba's Big Bear Band?” Petey asked.

“Bubba Bear's Big Time Band,” Bubba Bear corrected. “That's us. We're the best

percussion band in the Big Forest. Let's show him, boys!”

Gently, Bubba Bear sat Petey down on a stump. “Okay, take it from the top,” Bubba Bear ordered in his booming voice. The two younger bears began to beat on some hollow tree stumps in front of them. Boom! Bang!

“No! No!” Bubba Bear cried in frustration. “You have to feel the beat! Now pay attention.”

Bubba Bear grabbed the homemade drumsticks from one of the bears and began beating on a hollow stump. Bang! Bang! Bangity bang bang! Bubba Bear beat the drum in a pleasing rhythm.

“Now, let's try it again,” Bubba Bear instructed.

The two bears beat their drums again. Bang! Bangity bang, bang. Boom!

“Much better. With a little more practice, we are sure to win!” said Bubba Bear. “Take five, boys.”

The two younger bears took a break from their practice.

“What are you sure to win?” Petey asked.

“Why, the blue ribbon,” Bubba Bear cried. “I can just see that beautiful blue ribbon hanging around my neck. It sure will look good! Right, boys?”

“Right,” agreed Benny and Jimmy. “You’ll be the most handsome bear in the whole forest!”

“What’s the blue ribbon for?” Petey asked.

“For first place, of course!” Bubba Bear replied. “Everyone knows you get a blue ribbon for first place.”

“First place for what?” Petey asked in a frustrated tone.

“You know!” Benny Bear said. “You’re just trying to change the subject. You’re trying to make us forget about catching you spying!”

“That’s just plain sneaky,” Benny Bear commented.

Petey Squirrel almost yelled, “I told you, I wasn’t spying! Now, will you please tell me what you are all talking about?”

“Why, it’s the most exciting thing to happen in the Big Forest ever!” Jimmy Bear exclaimed. “All the animals are talking about it!”

“Talking about what!” Petey cried in exasperation.

The bears just stared at Petey with a genuine look of puzzlement on their faces.

“You really don’t know?” Bubba Bear cried in disbelief.

“No, I don’t!” Petey replied. “Now, are you going to tell me or not?”

“We’re talking about the Big Forest Creative Arts Festival and Extravaganza!” Bubba Bear roared.

“What’s that?” Petey asked.

“It’s a spectacular festival and contest,” Bubba Bear explained.

“Prizes will be given for the most creative entries,” Jimmy Bear added.

“All animals are eligible to enter,” Bubba Bear continued. “They just have to demonstrate their creativity in some way.”

“It’s the biggest event ever to hit the Big Forest,” Jimmy Bear gushed. “They’re having famous judges and everything! Everyone I know is planning to enter.”

“You are going to enter,” Benny Bear asked, “aren’t you?”

“But, you have to be creative,” Jimmy Bear reminded Petey.

“Of course, I’m going to enter!” Petey said trying to sound confident. “I’m very creative you know.”

Actually, Petey wasn’t exactly sure what being creative really meant—and he didn’t know if he had any creativity at all!

“Well, I have to go now,” Petey told the bears. “I guess I’ll see you at the festival.”

“Just remember,” Bubba Bear growled, “we plan to win first prize!”

“Yes, well... Great to meet you, boys,” Petey stammered, avoiding the subject. “Thanks for saving my life!”

Petey made a hasty retreat. Being very careful to avoid the mud holes and briar bushes, he headed back through the Big Forest. Petey was walking through a tall grove of trees when he heard something. Petey stopped to listen. The sounds were coming from a big maple tree above him.

“La. La. La, la...la,” came a lilting voice. “Me. Me...me...me.”

“Now what?” Petey cried.

**Next Time: It’s Not As Easy As It Seems!**