

read
up about
particular life
& habits of animal
which usually comes
from ground
and from

the Adventures of

SILVERTAIL.

Mrs. Agnes A. Rockrise
1435 56th Street,
Brooklyn, New York.

strong noun -

all used
as verb -
(not only
as an
action
alone.)

"she wailed" -
she said to herself
she defended herself
she wandered -
she asked herself
she purred
she thought
she sighed -

December 1, 1942.

SILVERTAIL.

by

Agnes Asbury Rockrise.

In a little white house at the foot of Apple Blossom Lane there lived Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Squirrel and their three children....Penny, Peter and Silvertail.the baby. His mother had named him Silvertail because of his beautiful tail which shone like silver.

After a long and serious talk, Mama and Daddy Squirrel had decided the time had come for Silvertail to attend school. But Silvertail did not want to go to school. He ~~much preferred~~^{wished} to stay at home and play in his mother's garden. In the garden was an old apple-tree in which he loved to swing from bough to bough scaring the blue-jays and sparrows which chattered and scolded one another in their branches. And then the visits to the Smiling Lady who lived in the big white farm house ^{across the lane} and who gave him peanuts. No, indeed. He didn't want to go to school. You couldn't have fun in school.

"But Silvertail," said his mother firmly but kindly, "you want to learn to read and write and count, don't you? You don't want to grow up to be a dunce---a knew-nothing."

"Yes. I want to have fun all the time." He wiggled his tail and cocked his head on one side looking at his mother with eyes black and shiny as shoe-buttons.

"For shame, Silvertail." His mother gave him a reproving look and shook her head sadly.

When Monday morning came, however, Silvertail seemed to have ~~had~~ a change of heart. He stood obediently while his mother helped him into his little red jacket trimmed with black buttons.

"Now, Silvertail, be a good boy and go along to school with big sister and brother. Miss Nutcracker is expecting you. Goodbye, children."

"Good-bye, Mommy," they ~~all~~ called in chorus.

Mama Squirrel stood in the doorway and watched them until they ~~were~~ had turned the corner. She wiped a tear out of the corner of her left eye.

"My little Silvertail. Never happy unless you're in mischief. If it isn't one thing, it's another. And yet, I think I love you best of all. My funny, naughty little Silvertail." She gave a big sigh and entered the house.

"Come, come, hurry or we'll be late for school." Big Sister Penny reached for her little brother's hand but he darted away.

"I'm not a baby. I can walk by myself," he said importantly.

"You are a baby," said his sister, sharply, "and

you take my hand right this minute."

None too pleased, he obeyed. He always did think Big Sister Penny was much too inclined to boss when their mother was not around. Someday, he'd show her he wouldn't be bossed. But Peter now, he was different. He was a real chum even if he was his brother and someday, he might even share his beautiful secret with him about the Smiling Lady. ~~That is,~~ ^{Maybe.}

"I'll take your other hand," said Peter. "There! Off we go." ~~Willingly enough,~~ Silvertail trotted off between his brother and sister. They were in the school-room just before the nine o'clock bell. Th

The little red schoolhouse stood on Woodpecker Road. Miss Nutcracker taught all the grades from the ABC class to the upper grade where they could recite the Six Times Table and ~~could~~ read aloud the story of "The Three Bears".

Peter went ~~at once~~ to his seat but Penny stood ^{Silvertail at her side} at the teacher's desk ~~with her little brother at her side.~~

"Good morning, Miss Nutcracker," she said. "This is my brother, Silvertail."

"Good-morning, Penny. So this is Silvertail."
Good-morning, my dear."

"G'mornin'."

"Now let's see. Silvertail, you take the last seat in the first row, for the present."

"Do I get a present, teacher?" He was ~~very much~~ interested now. *very glad now he had come to school*

"No, my dear, you do not get any present," replied Miss Nutcracker, smiling behind her ^{pauxy} hand. "You are to sit there until I make other arrangements."

"Oh-h-h." Silvertail's interest vanished as quickly as a balloon when you stick a pin in it.

"Ding Dong. Ding Dong. Ding Dong-g-g."

"Attention, class. Nine o'clock. Faces front. Hands on desks. Susie Q, turn around. All the way round. Now for the roll call." The teacher took a large book from her desk.

"Betty Anne."

"Present early."

"Sammy Foot."

"Present early."

"Tucker-too."

"Here."

"Silvertail."

There was no answer.

Miss Nutcracker called the name once more, slowly and distinctly. Someone giggled. Then another and another. Heads began to turn.

"Stop that silly giggling, everyone of you, or you'll all stay after school." Miss Nutcracker frowned severely over her spectacles.

"Silvertail, you will come to my desk. At once. I know where you are. You're hiding under your desk, but you forgot to hide your tail, too. You are as foolish as the ostrich who hid ^{only} his head in the sand and thought no one could see him. Come up here at once."

Big Sister and Peter held down their heads for shame.

Silvertail hopped on to his chair and then on to his desk, his beautiful tail arched.

"Get off that desk. A desk is made to write on. Not to sit on. You naughty boy!"

By now the whole class was squeaking with laughter. Some were even holding their fat little tummies. ~~They had laughed so hard it hurt.~~

"The entire class will stay after school. ~~That is, all except Penny and Peter. They have my sympathy.~~" ~~The class was suddenly very still.~~

Silvertail slipped up the aisle, his tail hanging low. ~~He wished the teacher hadn't said that about Penny and Peter. Why should they need sympathy, whatever that was.~~ ^{Why?} Was it so wrong to make the class laugh? ~~And yet they seemed very happy. What a funny world it was outside his mother's garden.~~

"I don't mind being a good boy but there's no fun in it. I'm young such a little while, I want to play all I can. Penny is ^{all} so grown up and serious and Peter---- well, he's just in between. Soon he'll be grown up too, and ~~we won't have any more fun together.~~ ~~I won't have~~

Silvertail faced his teacher.

"Do you know your alphabet, Silvertail?"

"Yes, teacher. I know all my letters. ~~Everyone one~~ ~~of them.~~" Silvertail stood up very straight, his bright eyes watching the teacher.

"You do! ^{Very good.} That is wonderful. ~~Suppose you~~ Recite them for me-----Are you giggling again, Susie Q? You

You can come right up here and stand at the other side of my desk. Quickly."

"Now, Silvertail, I'm listening."

Silvertail gave a proud flourish to his tail and began.

"M. L. ABC. W. Q.-----"

"Hold on. Hold on. I want the letters in the right place. The idea! Now begin at the beginning."

"Z--".

"I said the beginning, not the end!" Now, I'll give you one more chance." The room was ^{very} ~~so~~ quiet you ~~could hear a pin drop.~~

"C-A-T cat." Silvertail's eyes were black with mischief. Again there were squeaks of laughter all through the room.

"That will be all from you. I don't wonder your poor mother wants to send you to school. Sit on this stool. Up with you. And you can wear this Dunce's cap besides. It is ^{most} ~~very becoming~~ on you."

The class settled down to work hiding their faces ^{as much as possible} behind their books, ~~as much as possible~~. They dared not glance in Silvertail's direction. ~~for fear of laughing.~~ He looked so comical and even made faces behind the teacher's back. Then came the noon recess. All the pupils ran out into the schoolyard with their little tin lunch boxes. ~~They~~ They sat around under the trees in the warm sunshine, eating ~~their~~ sandwiches and cookies which their mothers had carefully packed for them.

Silvertail had been permitted to join the others but no one seemed to wish to play with him even though they had been glad enough to laugh at him when he was naughty, Even Penny and Peter did not go near him. He felt very lonely. He didn't even want any lunch.

which was coming she he couldn't stand.

The lunch hour passed quickly and then the school bell was rung.
Ding dong-g-g. Ding dong-g-g. Ding dong-g-g.

Miss Nutcracker stood in the doorway. All the squirrels, big and little, scampered back into the school-room and into their seats. But Silvertail dawdled.

"Come. Come. Hurry up. You move like an old man."

The schoolhouse door closed behind him. Freedom lay just the other side. His little heart went flip flop.

"Now children, you can study quietly for awhile. Silvertail, you can help me bring in the songbooks. They are in the storeroom closet. That will keep you out of mischief for a few minutes." Miss Nutcracker snapped the words.

Teacher and pupil made *several* many trips, back and forth. Finally but two books remained.

"Thankyou, Silvertail. Bring the last two books and *then* close the door after you."

Several minutes passed but there was no sign of Silvertail. The teacher went to the store-room door. She gave one look. The room was empty. A small open window high above the top shelf explained everything. The temptation had been too great. Miss Nutcracker called Penny and Peter to her desk and quietly explained what had happened. They were dismissed for the afternoon that they might go in search of their little brother.

naughty

Meanwhile Silvertail was turning handsprings for joy ~~aways~~ down the road. He was happy and free once more.

"The idea of going to school such a pretty day as this," he thought. "Poor Penny and Peter. What they are missing." He leaped lightly up the trunk of a maple tree, frightening a family of starlings. They squaked angrily at him.

"Shigash. Shigash. Shigash," he laughed, holding his ^{plump} fat little sides. He swung off dizzily again into space and landed in the middle of a very large ripe sunflower. The sunflower swayed perilously with his weight.

"Oh, I love these seeds. Mmmmmmm. I'll eat all I can." He started busily to work, the shells flying in all directions.

"Bow wow wow. Bow wow wow." Silvertail took a turnabout flying leap back into the maple. Not that he was afraid. Oh no, nothing like that, of course. Still he did feel much safer on the limb of a tree than perched on a sunflower with a strange dog yapping at him from below.

"Bow wow wow. Bow wow wow. Bow wow wow."

"Shigash. Shigash. Shigash," Silvertail laughed, looking down at the excited little dog. He clasped his little ^{paws} hands over his soft furry tummy. "He can't get me. He can't get me."

Just then, Mrs. Greenapple's yellow cat crossed the lane and the strange excited little dog was after her like a flash.

"Very good," said Silvertail, "but this is no place for me. Penny may come along any minute looking for me and ~~want to~~ take me back to school. I won't go. Not for a dozen Nuttackers." I think I'll go and see "Smiling Lady. I could eat some peanuts."

With that, he scuttled down the maple tree and along the road, taking a short cut through Farmer Corn-tassel's buckwheat field.

"I hope ~~the~~ Smiling Lady is home. I'm ~~really~~ hungry."

On and on he scampered, scaring the field mice and the butterflies in his path until he reached the familiar ~~xxxxxxx~~. kitchen garden and the backsteps. He stood there expectantly, his bright eyes fastened on the window. There seemed to be no sign of anyone at home.

"I'm getting hungrier by the minute. Penny and Peter must be home now and Mommy is giving them their milk and cookies." The thought of them made him hungrier than ever. He waited and waited, watching hopefully for someone to open that window. Suddenly, the window did open and out came a handful of bread. The window closed.

"That's for the birds," thought Silvertail, disgustedly. "~~I never eat bread if I can help it, especially crusts.~~" He was so disappointed. and was about to go sadly away when the Smiling Lady came to the window. She Saw him! His own Smiling Lady.

Silvertail was all aquiver with expectancy. He st

stood straight as a little martinet. In no time at all, she had opened the back door and was sitting on the top step, throwing peanuts to him. Sometimes she would hold them in her hand for him to come and get them. He felt no fear of her at all, because he knew she loved him. Her voice ~~when she spoke to him.~~ was so soft and gentle, Her face and eyes seemed to all smile together. He loved this ^{tall} kind lady very much. He had found her all by himself, too. To-day there was a little girl with her. Such a pretty little girl with hair like the sunshine and eyes blue as the skies. She stood in the doorway.

"Oh Aunt Millie, isn't he darling!"

"So that's her name. Well, I guess it's a pretty name but I like Smiling Lady best."

"Yes, he's quite the prettiest squirrel I've ever seen. And such a beautiful tail."

Silvertail was almost bursting with pride; ~~so much~~ so, that he nearly choked on a peanut.

"Goodness,

"Don't eat so fast, ~~xxxxxxfellow~~," said Smiling Lady. "Poor little fellow, you must be hungry." There, that's all for to-day. Come and see me again to-morrow," Smiling

Lady stood up and smiled at him and then went in the house, *closing the door after her x*

Silvertail felt very much better now but he did wish he had a drink. Ha! There was the bird-bath. ~~xxxxxxx~~ He took a sip. It was good! Then he leaned way down. *There was a splash.* Unfortunately he had not realized the depth of the clear fresh water. The result was, he got ~~his~~ face all sopping wet.

"That must be an ocean, it's so deep," He shook himself wrathfully x

He was mad as could be and shook his head vigorously.

"Tweety Tweety Tweet. Tweet Tweet." laughed the birds in the trees~~xxxx~~, flapping their wings with glee.

~~Now~~ He was madder than ever.

"Shigash! Shigash!" With a flying leap, he was up in the tree and the birds flew in all directions.

His satisfaction was ~~only~~ shortlived. The sun ~~by now~~ was setting and the shadows were growing longer and longer. The air, too, was ~~becoming~~ ^{was} chilly. Silvertail thought longingly of his mother's ^{cheerful} warm kitchen. Of the busy preparations for supper. Of the three cunning blue bowls filled with steaming hot gruel. Of the three little blue mugs of milk. Silvertail felt so lonely, he very much wanted to cry. But being a little boy squirrel, he couldn't do that. ~~Not yet, anyway.~~ *Not he.*

"I'm going home. Straight this minute. I'm going to get a scolding from Daddy but I guess I deserve it." He slipped quickly down the tree trunk to the ground and scampered along the road toward home. While he ran, he was planning what he would say to his mother. She might even forgive him. But his Father. Never.

Suddenly Silvertail spied in the fading light the form of a large dog bounding toward him. Quick as a wink, he had to turn tail and speed as fast as his legs would carry him in the opposite direction. To make matters worse, there was not a tree in sight. and the dog was gaining on him.

"This is awful. Awful," panted Silvertail.

He was so tired now, he felt he could not run another step. Every moment, he expected the dog to spring upon him from behind. Suddenly tearing around the corner of a fine, large house, he saw a TREE. Safty! With one last spurt of remaining strength, he reached the tree and one of its friendly branches. His little heart was beating pit-a-pat with fear.

Someone came out in the distance and rattled a dish.

"Rover. Rover. Here Rover."

It was quite dark now and Silvertail sat high up in tall the pine tree, with the night wind sighing sadly through its branches. He had never been out alone at night before. And then, without hardly knowing it, first one little tear and then another little tear fell.

"Oh, if my dear Mommy would only come and find me. I will do anything to make Mommy happy. I will go to school. I'll be good like Penny and Peter. I'll study my lessons." Poor little ^{lonely} Silvertail.

He slipped very carefully down to the ground and tried to find his way back to Smiling Lady's house, but it was all so dark and strange and unfamiliar.

"I ^{am} must be lost," he whimpered miserably. "I'll just have to find some corner to ^{to sleep} ^{until} hide in until the sun shines ^{maybe} again. Then, I can find my way home. Or maybe I'll hear the school bell. I'll watch for Penny and Peter." He thought he had never loved this brother and sister as much as now.

Timidly stepping along the dark country road, his beautiful, proud tail trailing in the dust, Silvertail came to a large house. Soft lights shone from the windows. They were like friendly, yellow eyes looking at him in the dark-

ness. ^{and beckoning him on} By now, ^{now} he was so tired that all he wanted was a little corner in which to curl up in and go to sleep. He saw a partly opened window ~~and in front of it some kind of a trellis.~~ He climbed up ~~partway and then hopped on~~ to the window sill. The room lay in a dim soft light. Silvertail sat there for a while peeping between the curtains. It was a very beautiful room. Just what made it beautiful, he did not know. But just looking at it seemed to make him happy and warm all over.

^{thought Silvertail} "How funny! ~~I can almost hear~~ ^{seem to be} the room talking to me.....'Come on in, Silvertail. You are lonely and tired, and this is such a nice room. Come in and rest awhile. Don't be afraid, Silvertail.'"

Somehow, ^{he} he could not resist that invitation. Down he jumped. on to something furry and soft like his mother's arms. ^{After that,} he didn't want to budge another step. He curled himself up into a round ball and went fast to sleep.

He slept and slept until he was awakened by a click-click. He opened his eyes to find the room in darkness. Somehow the room had lost its friendliness. He hid his head once more in his furry tail and tried to go to sleep. After awhile he opened one eye and then he opened the other eye. Much to his surprise, the moon was shining brightly through the large windows. He could see the outlines of objects in the room. "Thankyou, Mr. Moon, now I can see where I am."

He got up and stretched himself.

"I think I'll take a look around. My, but I'll have a lot to tell Penny and Peter. I always did want to see the wo

world." Very cautiously, he moved around the room and sniffed at all the beautiful and strange things for which he had no name.

"Yes, I must go to school and learn the names of these things. Then people will know what I am talking about." "I can---"

mother is suddenly he almost froze with terror. Over in the corner there was the strangest looking animal with three legs. He

had a big, big wide mouth with ^{lots of} shiny black and white teeth.

He was grinning at Silvertail.

Silvertail scurried back to his place behind the chair where he could peek out at that queer animal.

"Maybe ^{may want} ~~he~~ wants to be friends but I ^{don't} ~~don't~~ think ^{he could calm me up,} I like him. His mouth is too large. I'll wait and see if ^{I hope he}

^{doesn't} ~~he~~ comes after me." But nothing happened and Silvertail

drew a great sigh of relief. He thought he would do some fur-

ther exploring. Suddenly he began to wiggle his ^{sharp} little ~~xxxx~~

nose. He stood up as tall as he possibly could on his hind

legs, ~~xxxxforgettingxxx~~

"There's peanuts somewheres around here and I'm going to find them." ~~All that running gave me an appetite, I guess.~~

"Sniff Sniff. Sniff sniff." He ran up and down the

chairs. "Sniff sniff." He leaped over the sofa and ~~landed~~ ^{landed} ~~in the middle of~~ ^{landed} ~~in the middle of~~ a pile of soft downy pillows. "Wishooooo,"

he sneezed. Scrambling out from under them he made another

~~another~~ jump and landed so swiftly, on ^a ~~the~~ smooth, polished table that he nearly slid off on to the floor.

"Phew, that was a narrow escape.—Ha Ha! There's the peanuts. And in a nice shiny dish all ready for me to eat." He wasted no time. He ate and he ate and he ATE.

He almost forgot to leave one for manners as his mother had

taught him.

"My, but I feel good now. I think I'll take another sleep until morning." He gave a polite little yawn.

just then
^ Silvertail happened to look over the other side of the table. A bear! *he had a big wide* With shining glittering eyes, and wide open mouth. *of* He knew it was a bear. He had seen a picture of one in his sister's school book.

"Mommy! Mommy! I want to go home. Mom-m-m-y."

He couldn't think of a place where the bear would not find him. And he was only a ^{helpless} little squirrel.

"There's only one chance but I'll take it. I'll jump on the back of that strange animal. *with all the teeth. He's still smiling at me x* Perhaps he'll be a real friend, *after all.* Anyway, I'll soon know." Silvertail made one flying leap---and missed.

"Oh-h-h-h," wailed Silvertail, running back and forth, too frightened now to know ^{what to do, except to run} where to go next, ~~the~~ *and the* strange animal was making the queerest sounds, scolding him, he supposed, although he couldn't understand a word he said. There would be rumbling, grumbling words and then there would be high tweet tweet sounds. *Something like the birds,* he thought. Then there would be those grumbling, rumbling words. *again* The funny thing was, the faster he ran the ~~more~~ ^{faster} the queer animal scolded.

What was he to do?
He ~~didn't~~ know where to turn. *What with* The bear on one side and *this* the queer animal scolding him. *on the other x This was terrible x*

Then a door opened. Two people stood in the doorway. One of them carried a flashlight, *came out of a light,*

"Well," thought Silvertail, "that's ~~is~~ better than another strange animal. ~~But I'm going to hide in here just the same.~~"

He disappeared, suddenly and completely. *from sight x*
out of sight - and found himself

*on back wing
stands up*

"Ellen, I told you to shut Doremus in the kitchen."

"Yes ma'am, I did."

"Yes, but you see you only think you did. That was Doremus walking on the piano keys. I know his step.----"

"But Miss Cynthia ma'am, I did shut Doremus in the kitchen. I gave him his saucer of milk and he was drinking it when I closed the door. I saw him with my own two eyes."

"And haven't I told you always to close the piano at night? Where are your wits, girl?"

"I--I--."

"Close the piano. Don't stand there jabbering. What's the matter with you?"

"What was that!" Ellen gave a yell.

"What was what?" Miss Cynthia was plainly annoyed.

"That! Something flew out of the piano. Indeed it did, ma'am. I-I-."

"You're crazy, Ellen McGinty. I told you not to eat that second piece of mince pie for supper." And where's that wind coming from? Miss Cynthia walked over to ^athe window.

"Now I know. You even left ^{this}the window open. It was that Anderson cat that got in---."

"But ma'am, it had wings. I t flew out the window. It---."

"Did you ever see a cat with wings? I never did."

"But---".

"Never mind the buts. ~~Close the piano and you~~ close the window. And then off to bed with you," *and no more mince pie for supper. Remember now.*
"Yes ma'am."

Once more Silvertail found himself out in the still, cold night. He was surprised himself, how quickly he had arrived there.

"No wonder she thought I was a bird," Silvertail chuckled to himself. "But how bright, ^{ly} the moon shines. It is like daylight. Maybe I can find my way home. Anyway I'm going to try."

He started off down the road at a brisk pace. Suddenly he stopped and rubbed his eyes.

~~"Am I dreaming? That big apple tree? That bird bath? Why---why---. Then he turned a handspring. That was his own Smiling Lady's house right ahead of him! He was so happy he didn't know what to do.~~

and the white board,

from he knew it, he'd be drawn - to his bar
Mommy - Oh, how he loved her
Truly,

~~"Now I can find my way home---straight to my dear Mommy." His little feet ~~had~~ wings, as he sped along the well remembered trail. Even at that, he couldn't run fast enough to keep up with his eagerness to get home to those he loved.~~

to His Mommy and Daddy. Penny and Peter. Then he saw a tiny light through the trees. It was his house and ~~that was a lamp~~ *there was a* in the window. ~~was far him.~~

"Mommy ^{is} ~~must~~ be waiting up for me."

Through the garden gate and up the path he ran. The lamp in the window told him so much, ~~even if he was only a little boy squirrel.~~ His mother's love for him even if he had been so naughty. ~~That made him feel more than ever ashamed of himself.~~ *He began to feel* ~~He felt~~ *there was* a funny sort of lump in his throat that had never been there before. He peeked in the window, ~~and saw his~~ *there was*

his mother sitting at the table, fast asleep. Her spectacles had fallen off. *His am down mother,*

"Mommy is so tired. I must not wake her up now. That would be selfish. I'll just sit here on the doorstep and wait."

And there good Mother Squirrel found her Silvertail just as the sun was coming ^{up} over the hill. She opened the door ~~only~~ wide enough for him to slip through. Then she closed it very quietly after him.

"Silvertail, where have you been all this time? You have made me very unhappy, and ~~she~~ tried to look as severe ~~as~~ ~~she~~ could.

"Mommy, please forgive me. I-I---" "am --sorry--" very ~~naughty~~. First one tear and then another rolled down his unhappy little face. He knew little boys shouldn't cry but somehow this was different. He felt as if some of the naughtiness was being washed away.

"Well, Silvertail, somehow I think you have had punishment enough. Now drink this nice warm gruel. Then I will put you to bed and you must have a good sleep."

"But Mommy, I want to tell you----"

"We'll talk this afternoon after your nap."

"But please Mommy, I want to go back to school. And I'll be a good boy like Peter and I'll learn my lessons. Honest I will." He was so in earnest, his mother smiled.

"I'm very glad to hear you say that, dear, and I know you mean every word. That makes me very happy. Now hop into your bed and I'll tuck you up." ~~Mother Squirrel~~ patted Silvertail's head.

"Go to sleep, little one." In no time at all, he was fast asleep. As Mother Squirrel turned to leave the room where her three children were sleeping, she wiped away a tear with a corner of her little blue apron.

"I'm afraid my little Silvertail has to learn his lessons the hard way."

FINIS.