

Name _____

Riley and the Roaring Volcano

Riley the rabbit lived in Sunny Meadow, where the grass was green, and the sky was always blue. Riley was known for two things: his love of carrot cake and his very short temper. Whenever something didn't go his way, Riley's ears would turn bright red, his feet would thump the ground, and he'd let out an enormous "Harrumph!"

One sunny afternoon, Riley and his best friend, Mia the squirrel, were building the tallest tower of acorns they had ever attempted. They had carefully balanced fifty shiny acorns when suddenly-plop! A gust of wind knocked the tower over, and all the acorns tumbled to the ground.

Riley's ears turned red instantly. "Why does this always happen?!" he shouted. His feet began thumping wildly. "I worked so hard, and now it's ruined!"

"Riley, it's okay," said Mia calmly. "We can rebuild it. Look, the acorns are still here."

But Riley didn't listen. He stomped off to his burrow, mumbling about how unfair life was. Once inside, he kicked his favorite carrot pillow, which only made him feel worse.

As Riley sulked, his grandmother, Grandma Hazel, hopped in with a gentle smile. "Riley, my dear, I heard your little 'volcano eruption.' What's the matter?"

Riley sighed. "Our tower fell over, and it wasn't my fault! It made me so mad I couldn't think straight."

Grandma Hazel nodded. "Getting mad is normal, but letting your anger control you-well, that's like letting a volcano erupt without warning. It can be messy and hurtful. Want to learn a trick to cool down your volcano?"

Riley's ears perked up. "A trick? Like magic?"

"Sort of!" Grandma Hazel said. "It's called the 'Stop and Breathe' trick. When you feel your volcano bubbling up, stop what you're doing, close your eyes, and take five deep breaths. Then, ask yourself, 'Is this really the end of the world, or can I fix it?'"

Riley decided to give it a try. The next day, he and Mia rebuilt their tower. Just as they placed the last acorn, a blue jay swooped down, knocking the whole thing over again. Riley's ears turned red, and he felt the bubbling anger rise.

But this time, he stopped. He closed his eyes and took five deep breaths. In and out. Slowly, he felt his volcano cool down. When he opened his eyes, he said, "It's okay, Mia. Let's try again."

Mia grinned. "Great idea, Riley! Maybe this time, we can build it even stronger."

Together, they built a tower of seventy acorns. It stood tall and proud, and Riley felt proud too-not just of the tower but of how he had kept his volcano from erupting.

From that day on, Riley became known not just for his love of carrot cake but for his ability to stay cool-even when things didn't go his way.

