



Help!

There was a great big tree, on the edge of the deep dark wood, that was especially good for climbing. It had low branches sticking out in all the right places, so you could easily get a foothold. One afternoon Squarehead, SquareNess and lots of other children from Squaretown were having a great time, swarming over the big old tree like ants on a nest.

The smaller children tended to stay near the bottom. They watched in awe as some of the bigger children, like Squarehead, climbed into the higher branches. SquareNess was the most daring climber of them all.

“Look at me!” She shouted from the tippy top of the tree.

Standing at the bottom, with his feet firmly on the ground, the Hairy Scary peered anxiously up into the branches.

“Please be careful!” He said.

Hairy Scary could just see her peeping down at him through the branches and leaves.

“Come down.” He pleaded. **“You’re too high!”**

But Ness just laughed.

“Why don’t you come up?”

Hairy Scary shook his head.

“I’m too big.”

“Too scared you mean!” Laughed Ness.

“I’m not scared!” said Hairy Scary. **“Monsters aren’t scared of old trees.”**

“Scaredy cat! Scaredy cat!” Yelled Ness.

“SCAREDY CAT! SCAREDY CAT!” Shouted the smaller children, joining in.

Poor Hairy Scary. He sat down on the ground and put his fingers in his ears to block out their laughter. The truth is, he was a bit scared and, despite being huge, it made him feel small and silly. At the end of the day, when the children went home for tea, he stayed sitting at the bottom of the tree.

“Aren’t you coming?” Asked Squarehead.

“No.” Said Hairy Scary. **“I just feel like sitting here for a bit.”**

Staying there alone and hungry made him feel worse.

“Stupid monster!” he said to himself. **“Can’t even climb a tree.”**

And then a few minutes later he muttered: **“Dumb old scaredy cat. No wonder they’ve all gone home and left you like old rubbish.”**

Finally, when he’d called himself all the names he could think of, he stood up and decided to climb the tree once and for all. He looked up into its branches and felt his legs turn to jelly.

“Get up that tree!” He muttered reaching up for a branch thick enough to bear his weight. **“Come on, climb!”**

After tea Squarehead came back to look for Hairy Scary, but he couldn’t see him anywhere.

“Hello?” He called. **“Where are you Hairy?”**

There was no answer, so he went back home. Hairy Scary didn’t come back that night. The next morning, Squarehead went back to the tree with Chinwag, but they still couldn’t find him, so they went to search elsewhere.

All that day they searched. And all the next day. And the day after that, but he was nowhere to be seen. Squarehead gazed at the deep, dark wood beyond the tree and wondered if Hairy Scary had gone in there and got lost.

SquareNess was very upset: **“It’s all my fault, for calling him a scaredy cat.”**

They sat down at the bottom of the big tree and SquareNess burst into tears. Now, if there’s one thing the Hairy Scary can’t bear, it’s the sound of someone crying – even if he is stuck right at the top of a very tall tree.

“Help!” He called down to them, **“I’m stuck, and that girl needs a hug.”**

They all looked up in surprise.

Then SquareNess scooted up the tree like a little monkey. When she was almost at the top, she saw Hairy Scary clinging to a branch.

“Have you been up here all this time?” She asked.

“Yes.” Said Hairy Scary miserably. **“I got all the way up, and then I was too scared to get down and when I saw you looking for me I was too scared to tell you I couldn’t get down and, and, and I’m a big scaredy cat...”**

He had to stop for a minute and sob. Great big tears fell from his eyes and he booed and hooed until the tree shook.

“You’re not a scaredy cat.” Said Ness. **“You got all the way to the top of this tree, and then you stayed here for three days!”**

The Hairy Scary thought about this for a moment.

“I did, didn’t I?” He grinned.

“No-one has ever been brave enough to do that before!” Said SquareNess.

Then SquareNess showed Hairy Scary how to climb down the big tree. She knew all the best places to put your feet and which were the best branches to hang on to. When they got to the bottom, he gave her biggest hug she’d ever had.

“Thanks!” He said.

A bit later on, when Hairy Scary had finished his third tea (three baked beans on toast, and a whole chocolate cake) Squarehead asked:

“Was it very scary at the top of the big tree?”

“Only if I looked down.” Said Hairy Scary.

“It’s ok to be scared.” Said Squarehead. **“We all get scared sometimes.”**

“Do you?” Said Hairy Scary, very surprised.

“But there’s only thing you should never be afraid of.” said Squarehead.

“What’s that?” Asked Hairy.

“Never be afraid to ask for help.”

